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100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

IN THE LAP OF FORTUNE.

A Story

"STRANGER THAN FICTION."

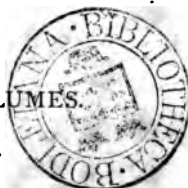
By JOSEPH HATTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY OF POPPIES," "THE TALLANTS OF
BARTON," ETC.

"To be thrown upon one's own resources is to be cast IN THE VERY LAP
OF FORTUNE; for our faculties then undergo a development, and display
an energy, of which they were previously unsusceptible."—FRANKLIN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. "FOUND WANTING"	I
II. IN WHICH A NEW ERA DAWNS UPON THE HOUSE OF TITSY	II
III. IN WHICH RETRIBUTION OVERTAKES THE WICKED	22
IV. MRS. SMICK GIVES JACOB A PROOF OF HER FRIENDLY REGARD.	32
V. "UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO A QUACK"	51
VI. JACOB STANDS ON THE THRESHOLD OF HIS FUTURE	67
VII. RETURNS ONCE MORE TO THE GROVE, WHERE JACOB NARRATES HIS LONDON ADVENTURES TO MR. WINDGATE WILLIAMS	89
VIII. OF CERTAIN EMIGRANTS ON BOARD THE "HESPERUS," AND CONCERNING A WELL- KNOWN MELODY THAT LED TO A BLISS- FUL DISCOVERY	102

CHAPTER	PAGE
IX. A STORM ON THE WELSH COAST . . .	114
X. AFTER THE STORM	130
XI. AN ACTOR'S HOLIDAY	143
XII. HOW JACOB PERFORMED A DELICATE NEGOTIATION ON BEHALF OF MR. PAUL FERRIS, TOGETHER WITH OTHER INTERESTING INFORMATION	163
XIII. THE BEGINNING OF THE END	178
XIV. TWO NOVELS IN BRIEF	185
XV. A LETTER FROM MR. HORATIO JOHNSON	198
XVI. CLOSING SCENES.	210
XVII. MR. BONSALE AS A CABINET MINISTER SEEKS RE-ELECTION FOR MIDDLETON AND IS OPPOSED	224
XVIII. WHICH ENDS THIS STRANGE, EVENTFUL HISTORY	250



IN THE LAP OF FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.

"FOUND WANTING."

WHEN Jacob re-entered the court, Ephraim Magar was at the bar, and Mr. Wentworth Quarrington, Q.C., had commenced his address for the prosecution. Jacob took his turn in reporting the famous oration ; but frequently lost himself in amazement at the terrible story of guilt which the learned counsel linked together in a chain of circumstantial evidence that seemed to cling about the prisoner, and all but strangle him where he stood. Magar glanced round

the court with a searching, sunken eye. Presently his attention became concentrated upon the counsel's speech, and an occasional clutching of the bar, a sudden flush, a startled look showed how nearly some of the advocate's story touched the prisoner. But Magar was not aware that his movements could be read; he was trying to appear calm and indifferent.

It was almost pitiable to see the great man of Middleton, the leader of public opinion, the benevolent Mayor, the straightforward, out-spoken, manly founder of his own fortunes, standing in the felon's dock to be tried for one of the most horrible crimes recorded in the annals of the county—a crime which had set all the Midlands in a tremor of horror—a crime which the author of this history again assures his readers he has not exaggerated.


Perhaps the learned Q.C. travelled beyond the limits of what may have been fairly considered to be his duty when he endeavoured to show that the wretched prisoner at the bar had been benevolent

only to hide his sin ; that he had busied himself in public matters to raise himself above suspicion ; that he had striven to lull the reproaches of conscience by acts of charity ; that he had made sacrifices to the murdered manes of poor Silas Collinson, in the vain hope that he would thus appease the anger of Him who in His own good time discovereth the murdered and the murderer.

Never, however, did there appear to be a clearer case of guilt than the evidence of the witnesses bore out. Susan Harley told the terrible story with which our readers are acquainted. She identified the ring as the property of Silas Collinson, and she also identified as his a pin and a snuff-box found in Magar's iron chest. She proved the receipt of the £100, which the prisoner paid her as part of the proceeds of the sale of Collinson's effects ; she told the story of his overtures to her on that occasion, and gave evidence as to the letters which Magar professed to have received from Collinson. In cross-exami-


nation Mr. Arthur Macintyre, Q.C. (who with Sir Howard Pisquelly, Bart., Q.C., had been specially retained for the defence) tried to shake Susan's evidence, but only succeeded in his object so far as to get upon the judge's notes that she could not say whether Collinson might not have given to his friend Magar the snuff-box and pin ; and that one Julius Jennings had also professed to have heard from Collinson.

Then there were witnesses who proved that Collinson and Jennings and Magar were drinking together on the Sunday night upon which Collinson was supposed to have started for America ; there was the constable who had flashed his lantern upon the mill on that same night, that dreadful "November 15" of our story ; there was the timid husband who had been out late, and was frightened when crossing the Middleton bridge at the cry which came out of the "darkness visible" of the mill, where a light moved from one room to the other ; there was another witness to swear that



she marked the letter "C" on some linen proved to have been Collinson's, which had been found at the mill; there was Collinson's old housekeeper to swear to his handkerchief and its initials of "S. C.," found in Magar's house; there was the policemen who had taken the prisoner to gaol; and the superintendent who had searched in vain for any receipts of moneys or letters from Collinson to Magar since Collinson's disappearance, but who produced a receipt signed by Collinson, and dated November 15, for £200, and a bill for the same amount, and the copy of a bill of exchange for £200, at six months, drawn by Collinson and accepted by Magar, but which had not passed through a bank. A banker's clerk proved that Magar opened a banking account on the Monday following, with £200; an auctioneer proved paying Magar £4,500, in three sums, the result of the sale of Collinson's property; the aforesaid banker's clerk proved the payment into the bank of these moneys, showing that no payments

had been made to Silas Collinson, and that £500 had been paid to Julius Jennings. A surgeon, who had known Collinson intimately, was of opinion that the murdered man had been killed by blows on the head with a blunt instrument, and there were other witnesses called to speak to minor details, such as Magar's trafficking with Collinson's property, and Collinson's complaints that he could not get his money from Magar, and that he was going to have a final meeting to arrange matters on the Sunday night in question, when Magar had promised "to settle up." The cross-examination upon all these and other facts aimed at several things—one was to make the jury believe that Collinson still lived, and that the bones in question were not in any way identified (but no witnesses were called for the defence); another was to insinuate into their minds that if the remains in question were Collinson's, not Magar, but the man so often spoken of as Julius Jennings, whom the police had been unable to capture, was the murderer another was



to make capital out of poor Tom Titsy's acquittal by the grand jury, which Sir Howard Pisquelly, in his eloquent defence of the prisoner, characterised as a piece of justice to an innocent fellow-creature, which he hoped the intelligent jury before him would emulate; and the closing effort of the defence was an appeal to the jury in favour of a man who had in every relation of life shown himself to be actuated by feelings altogether at variance with those which had been imputed to him; a man whose benevolent acts the learned counsel for the prosecution had chosen most unwarrantably to array against him on a theory which, if it had any weight, would go to show that our great philanthropists only gave money to the poor and endowed churches and hospitals because they were murderers striving to shield their sins; a man who had ever been characterised by an outspoken honesty altogether incompatible with guilt, who had given of his self-earned riches to the poor and needy, which was at variance with murdering for gold;

a man of social standing, an honourable burgess, a wise magistrate, and a man who by the verdict of the jury would either be sent home to his sorrowing friends and to the poor by whom he was revered and beloved, or who would be sent forth to die the ignominious and awful death of a murderer on the gallows.

This and much more did the learned and eloquent counsel urge in behalf of the prisoner, as any of my readers will find by consulting the files of the Dinsley and Middleton journals, which issued special supplements containing full reports of the trial.

Magar heaved a deep sigh at the conclusion of his counsel's address, and looked eagerly at the jurymen, who began to talk to each other in noisy whispers.

Then there was a sudden and death-like stillness, made more awful by the darkening shades of evening which fell upon the oriel windows. The densely crowded court seemed to hold its breath, and to wait.

"Gentlemen of the jury, what say ye? Is the prisoner at the bar 'Guilty,' or 'Not Guilty'?"

The words fell one after the other upon the court with ominous distinctness. Even the bar looked earnestly towards the jury-box. When the foreman in a clear but trembling voice said "Guilty," the people in court gave a great gasp for the breath which they had previously stifled in their anxiety; and before the echo of the dread word was still there was a clank of irons in the dock, where the prisoner had fallen, a senseless heap of crushed humanity.

Water was at hand, but it only served to awaken the wretched man to a sense of his position; his cries for "mercy," his protestations of innocence rang through the building; but Justice was inexorable. "Silence!" "Silence!" was demanded from one part of the court, to be repeated by another; and then the prisoner was asked if he had anything to say why the sentence of the law should not be passed upon him.

Exhausted by his cries, and awed by a

sudden realisation of his danger, the prisoner, clutching the bar, and trembling from head to foot, stared vacantly at the judge, who, putting on a black cap, as the twilight was deepening into night, sentenced the prisoner to the last awful penalty of offended justice.

Then the Court broke up ; the trumpets were sounded ; the Bar went to dinner ; the reporters went home to finish their work ; the crowd gradually dispersed, pouring itself into inns and private houses, and up and down narrow streets and noisy thoroughfares. A few of the more distinguished citizens and visitors went home to dress for the theatre ; while all over the town dashed slipshod men crying catch-penny chronicles of "the trial and condemnation of Ephraim Magar for the murder of Silas Collinson, together with a copy of verses written on the melancholy occasion—only one penny each."



CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH A NEW ERA DAWNS UPON THE
HOUSE OF TITSY.



HEY were all sitting round the fire in the old thatched cottage—Tom Titsy, Susan Harley, Mr. Horatio Johnson, and Mrs. Titsy. The Doctor was blowing a cloud of smoke up among the chimney ornaments. The best family tea-tray occupied its usual conspicuous position. The oak corner cupboard shone with unwonted radiance. Cæsar lay asleep on the hearth ; Mrs. Titsy was knitting ; Tom was looking into the fire ; and Susan Harley was looking at Tom.

“ Well, we are a nice little family party after all,” said the Doctor, making an ele-

gant smoke ring, and watching it mount upwards until it came to grief against the artificial apple. "All things are arranged for a special purpose ; I trace the finger of Fate and a kind Providence throughout all our trials : troubles are stepping-stones to happiness—blessed are the sweets of philosophy."

"What we should ha' done without you, Doctor, I will not pretend to say—the Lord only knows," said Mrs. Titsy, slowly plying her needles.

Susan, whose appearance had much improved since we saw her at the assizes, looked up into the Doctor's face admiringly.

"You see how Fate pursued that wretched creature who was sentenced to death a week ago ; and 'may the Lord have mercy on his soul !' say I, with the judge. Fate, Susan, marked you down for one of its instruments, and Retribution required that you should be slow in the work of detection, that the rascal might prosper for a while, and get up to a height

from which his fall would be all the more terrible ; in due time Fate suggested to you the idea of papering that little box, and Fate provided the paper."

"Rather, Doctor, was I not punished all that time for my wickedness in not writing to you, and my dear friend here who has given to me the love of a mother ; those long weary nights and months and years when I thought I should go mad, and did do so sometimes I think ; was not all this a deserved punishment for my pride, which would not let me own that I had been deceived ; and for my injustice to an honest man who would not have deceived me ? I ought to have known that he would not have sent for me to America—he would have fetched me."

Susan spoke with unwonted animation. Tom turned his eyes from the fire to look at her ; while Mrs. Titsy let her knitting fall into her lap to note the Doctor's reply.

"There is much in what thou sayest,

girl," said the Doctor, evidently bent upon a speech of more than ordinary importance, indicated as much by the extension of his right hand, in which he held his pipe, as by his grandiloquent rendering of "thou sayest."

"Pride is a bad adviser, and an ungrateful heart is a miserable companion. But my friend Susan Harley hath neither the one nor the other as we understand those weaknesses of weak humanity. The pride which attacked her was that which springs from a laudable self-esteem—a virtuous, honest, and high-minded girl, she could not endure that one idle gossip should whisper a word to sully her fair fame, and she could not live to be taunted by the Mrs. Gompsons of this world with having done an imprudent action—she wanted courage, that noble attribute of our nature which prompts us never to give in against the longest odds, but induces us to bear and hope and strive, and, what is more, makes us win at last. Win, I say, as we shall do, for Truth and Honesty must have

their day when Villainy is dethroned. Moreover, touching the self-made charge of ingratitude, the fact that our Susan suffered, that she grieved after us, that she dreamed about us, and longed to come and sit here under this humble but honest roof, proves that she had a grateful heart ; and even if she had not—I only use *if* for the sake of argument—if, I say again, this dear girl, destined to suffer so much, that the guilty might be brought to punishment—if she had not been grateful the open confession of a fault straightway amendeth it. And with regard to Mr. Thomas Titsy, Fate, hard as it may seem, required that he should be placed in danger, that he should be seized by the law and locked up in a cell, in order that such an amount of sympathy and compassion might be excited in the loving breast of Susan Harley” (Susan held down her head and Tom fidgeted with his hands), “ to induce her to turn to the man who has loved her from the first, and who loves her now, and say to him, ‘ Tom, thou shalt be more

to me than my brother—take me for thy wife.’”

Here something seemed suddenly to rise in the Doctor’s throat, and after stammering a little and coughing, he found he could say no more; he, therefore, quietly whispered *Moniti meliora sequamur*, and sat down, by which time Mrs. Titsy was weeping all over her knitting.

Susan, whose kindness towards Tom had been very great during the last few days, and whose heart had yearned to comfort and console him, though she felt that the Doctor had almost interpreted her own wishes, could only follow the example of Mrs. Titsy and fall to a-crying; but when Tom came towards her and held out his hand, she laid hers in it. Cæsar woke up at the moment, and seemed to ratify the engagement by licking both hands and then inserting his nose between them.

When Mrs. Titsy looked up through her tears, the Doctor made a signal to her, and while one went out to see that the pigeon-cote door was shut, the other went upstairs

to sit against the window, where the moon was shining in upon a patchwork quilt, and making a chest of old oak drawers as bright as the looking-glass that hung upon the whitewashed wall.

"Shall it be so, Susan?" said Tom, after a long pause.

Susan returned the pressure of his hand.

"I think I *could* hold up my head again, lass, in some spot where nobody 'ud know me, if I had thee to live for."

This was a longer speech than Tom had ever made to Susan in the way of love-making; and there was something so forlorn and sad and appealing in his manner, that Susan felt glad he had said so much.

"Tom, dear Tom," she said in a faltering voice, "you have suffered a great deal through me; nay, don't deny it; if, after all, you think that I am worthy——"

"Susan! Susan! God bless thee, lass; say no more—all the old time comes back, and the old feeling," and Tom, pressing her hand, drew Susan towards him, and she laid her head upon his shoulder.

Of course the pigeon-cote door was shut : so the Doctor went upstairs, not to his own room, but to Mrs. Titsy's door.

"Deary me, that must be a knock," said Mrs. Titsy, who had been sitting at the window—"Yes ; and there it is again."

"Mrs. Titsy ! Mrs. Titsy !" a voice whispered through the key-hole.

"It is indeed the Doctor," and Mrs. Titsy went to the door.

"Don't be alarmed," said the Doctor ; "but put your bonnet and shawl on ; I want to have a little talk with you, and we must leave them for a while."

Mrs. Titsy frequently indulged in presentiments. "Sometimes," she said to herself, "it is a death tick, sometimes it is somebody treading on one's grave, sometimes it is a stranger on the bar, or a letter in the candle ; but for three days it's been no death warning—that's certain."

The Doctor was waiting for her at the bottom of the stairs.

"Tell them we shall be back again in half an hour," he said.

Mrs. Titsy put her head into the kitchen and did as she was desired ; and then she took the arm gallantly offered to her by her famous lodger, and suffered herself to be conducted out into the moonlight.

“ You will think my conduct strange, perhaps, my dear madam,” said the Doctor, when they had walked a short distance.

“ Hem !” said Mrs. Titsy, not knowing what to say : she did not think his conduct at all peculiar ; she was a woman with presentiments.

“ But I will no longer delay what I have to say to you.”

Mrs. Titsy leaned a little more heavily on the Doctor’s arm.

“ We are not young, you and I, Mrs. Titsy ; I am getting on towards fifty ; and though you married young, your son’s manly form tells of the matronly period of life, my dear madam, at which you have also arrived, although Father Time has dealt kindly with you, and left you with personal attractions which I have long ad-

mired, while your good disposition and kind heart are as fresh as ever."

"Really! Mr. Johnson," said Mrs. Titsy.

"Old fools are the worst of fools they say; I am not going to play the goose, and try to make love; but Mrs. Titsy, if you will become Mrs. Horatio Johnson, that individual will be happy for the remainder of his days, and will endeavour to make you a good husband, and Tom and Susan a good father. *Moniti meliora sequamur!*"

She knew it! When the Doctor whispered at the door she was sure that this was coming. She was a woman, however, and of course must be astonished and confused at the Doctor's proposition, though I must do Mrs. Titsy the justice to say that she made as little fuss as could possibly be expected from the most ingenuous of widows at so trying a moment. After many faltering attempts to reply to the Doctor in suitable terms, she leaned nearly all her weight upon his willing arm, and said she was his. When the two were re-

turning, and had left behind them the street in which I first introduced Jacob Martyn to my readers, the Doctor was unfolding to Mrs. Titsy his plans for the future. And capital plans they were.

Thus while night, dark and hideous, was setting in upon the fortunes of Ephraim Magar, the morning of hope was dawning for some others in my story who had almost despaired of the sunshine.





CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH RETRIBUTION OVERTAKES THE
WICKED.

OF course everybody in Middleton-on-the-Water knew that Magar was a bad fellow. The barber had said to himself many a time —so he informed several of his customers —“ that man was not born to be drowned.” Though, by-the-by, several men had said the same thing about Grippts the lawyer, and had made a mistake. For it seems that although Grippts heard the Mayor sentenced to death, Magar was the longest liver of the two. Grippts had made a great effort to save his friend Magar : he had

not only engaged the best counsel, and suborned several witnesses (who were not called) to perjure themselves; but in the famous chapel where he was wont to hold forth, he had himself startled the congregation by a special prayer for the charitable Mayor of Middleton, who was like to die the death of a martyr; he had also laid a heavy bet about the matter, which he had doubled when the grand jury threw out the bill against Tom Titsy.

Whether defeat preyed upon his mind to such an extent as to unseat his reason and prompt him to commit suicide, or whether he lost his way in a fog, cannot now be ascertained; but one night, soon after Magar's conviction, he walked into a pond near his own house, and was drowned. His hat floating on the rank surface of the stagnant pool, he was found there the next morning with his blue bag still in his hand, which was considered by an intelligent jury evidence sufficient of his having accidentally walked into the water. They returned "a verdict accordingly," coupled

with "a recommendation to the owner of the pool to protect (by posts and rails) other persons from a similar fatal mistake."

So that unkind people who said Mr. Gripps was not born to be drowned, were mistaken. Mr. Northcotes, however, told the superintendent of the police, who told the inspector, who told the oldest officer in the force, who told the barber, that Gripps had only saved himself from a worse end. The lawyer, therefore, it will be seen, had few friends in Middleton. Even his chapel-going acquaintances were glad to be rid of him, because he had a mortgage on their house of prayer, out of which he made money and enforced friendship and "brotherly love."

It was not a little surprising to discover after Magar's condemnation how many people in Middleton had "suspected something" for years past. It was a delicate matter to speak about, they all agreed; but many shrewd burgesses had wondered over their pipes how it was that Magar

“got on in life so rapidly after Collinson’s disappearance.”

Several people had had “their suspicions” about the young yeoman’s visit to America. The postman said it was true he had left American letters at Magar’s; but he had often turned them over and thought they had a doubtful appearance. The watchman who heard the noises at the mill had started up in his sleep, as his wife could bear witness, with that strange midnight screech ringing in his ears. The man who paused a moment to listen on the fatal night had often thought “if there should have been some foul play at work,” but had not dared to speak about it, or somehow had not thought to do so. The waiter at the inn where the three men met could have sworn there was “something queer going on,” but how was he to know?

The town was divided about Jennings. One half of it would not believe that such a mild fellow as he could have really been concerned in killing his friend; while the

other half had no faith in the sneaking, canting, pious manner which Jennings had always affected, and with which he covered his villany, as Magar's was hidden beneath a cloak of assumed benevolence.

There was no difference of opinion about the righteousness of the verdict against Magar. Only one person evinced any feeling about the matter. This was a wretched woman to whom he had promised marriage when he was a young man. She came from a town near Middleton, and demanded admission to his cell as a relative. "If I am not his wife I ought to have been," she said in a hoarse, broken voice to the governor of the gaol. "It is true," said Magar, "let her come to me." Even Grippe and Magar had their mourners. When the jurymen went to view the lawyer's body, cold and wet and ghastly, at the body's own cold cheerless lonely house, they found a wretched cur sitting by the corpse, whining piteously, utterly forgetting and forgiving all the hard kicks it had received from its dead master's

heavy boots. Grippe had his dog mourner ; Magar in his last hours was solaced by a woman. Ruined, humiliated, disgraced as she had been by this hypocrite and murderer, the woman threw herself upon his neck, and sobbed as earnestly as if he had deserved her tenderness and affection. She never once thought of her wrongs ; I am not prepared to say that she would not have changed places with him, and died praying for his happiness, if she could have been allowed to do so. For she remembered when Magar had been kind to her ; when he came to her father's house at nights, and they went out together in the fields. They had been lovers in the early days ; but for a vile mischief-maker they would have been married in their innocence. Eventually Magar's own selfishness led to their living together without the rites of marriage. There were unhappily many local precedents for this kind of arrangement ; how far it demoralised Magar, brutalised his nature, this setting law, morality, religion, and true love at

defiance, it is hard to say ; but I suspect he was a brute to begin with, and his love of money and vulgar ambition overthrew him at last.

Soon after this woman left the gaol on that last day, the prisoner, who had wailed and cried and asserted his innocence in the most abject way, requested to be provided with writing materials. He was occupied until far into the night, preparing a full confession of his crime, which he placed in the hands of the chaplain, on condition that if he were reprieved it should be returned to him unsealed ; and that if he were not, the packet should remain unopened until two years after the execution, when the contents were to be made public. The chaplain accepted this trust, and pledged himself, as a clergyman, to do his best to fulfil it to the letter.


The prisoner paused occasionally to listen ; but whenever he did so, one of the men who sat there watching him made a noise with his feet, or moved about : he was rather tender-hearted, this officer,

despite his long experience, and did not wish the convict to hear what *he* heard, and what many people heard during that long night, when the weight of some dire event seemed to lie heavily upon the town, and the thud, thud, of the carpenter's hammer sent a cold shiver through many a stalwart frame.

* * * * *

An evening mist hung about the Dinsley County Prisons, and rain fell at intervals. The old church bells were chiming for evening service, which was held there twice during the week : but the sound of the bells seemed to die away in the fog, as if the one little breath of air that moved the mist refused to carry it. In front of the prisons joiners were at work, watched by a few bystanders, who stared vaguely at something which loomed up in the thick atmosphere, and grew under the hammers of the workmen. At length the bells ceased ; the lamplighter lighted the town lamps ; a few stars made shambling efforts to peer through the murky night ; a couple

of lanterns moved mysteriously about the ugly excrescence that was gradually deforming the symmetry of a well-designed building, and the hammering was continued until the night was well-nigh worn out, and the scaffold had grown its full. They put black boards about it to hide its ugliness; but when morning came, it loomed forth with frightful reality, a dreadful blot upon the world's civilisation. Black, gaunt, and grim, the monster, hammered into existence the day before, boldly challenged the daylight, and awaited its victim. "Blood for blood," it seemed to say. Every balk and beam stood out defiantly as if to assert the bloody right of sacrifice. In the presence of such an enemy to man it was almost necessary, ere man's right to set it up could be acknowledged, that the imagination should wander to that dark low building by the Middleton river, and conjure up the deed that had been done there, when the cries of the victim went up unavailingly in the darkness. But supported even by these memories, that black, dread instru-



ment made the heart sick, and inspired in the minds of many who passed it, besides Jacob Martyn, a wish that Justice could do her needful work without the aid of such a minister. . . . Before the morning was far advanced, Silas Collinson was avenged. The monster gallows was gorged with a strangled corpse.





CHAPTER IV.

MRS. SMICK GIVES JACOB A PROOF OF HER
FRIENDLY REGARD.

SHE *is* indeed a pretty girl," said Jacob, looking over the way, as the Dinsley bells were peacefully chiming for church.

"A round face, a dimple in each cheek, and how graceful! By Jove, the editor is right. And no, yes—she's going to look up—no, on she goes, like Saint Cecilia, to prayers."

Jacob was standing at the window of the sitting-room, shared in common by Mr. Williams and himself, when he made these observations.

The young lady over the way was going to church, and Jacob was watching her with marked interest. Why a young fellow so desperately in love as he was, and engaged, in fact, as he considered himself to be, to a beautiful woman, worthy the hand of a peer, should be wasting time and thought upon a girl whom he had only seen half a dozen times, I cannot undertake to say.

As an admirer of beauty in nature and art, a young man has a perfect right to study both, and however much his affections might have been engaged elsewhere, I do not see why Jacob should not admire the pretty, graceful ways, and sunny eyes, and dimpled cheeks of Edith Winthorpe, who lived over the way. But surely it was not necessary that he should look up every time he saw Edith appear anywhere near the drawing-room window; nor was it necessary whenever the sounds of a piano came from the same quarter that he should make a point of opening the window to hear the music.

Perhaps Edith might not have been called by most people a fine pianiste ; but Jacob thought the player fairly interpreted the compositions of some of the great masters ; so he listened, and looked at the same time.

On this Sunday morning he was particularly struck with Miss Edith Winthorpe's graceful and pretty appearance ; and he wondered who her two hard and haughty-looking companions were.

Mrs. Smick entered the room, opportunely, to remove the remains of his late breakfast. She sat down, crossed her arms, and composed herself for a talk, in token of her desire to be friendly with Jacob, and of her readiness to answer the questions which he commenced to ask concerning the Winthorpes.

“ Oh, yes, nice sort of people as you say, which it were not for a neighbour to say otherwise, though one as has known better days, and can remember them when things were not so easy as they are now ; as decent a gentleman as you'd wish to have

knowed, sir, the deceased Mr. Winthorpe, which was a teacher of music and drawin', though he might have follerd a better trade ; but which my poor Smick liked the gentleman for his kind ways, and always a comin to see him when he came home from forring parts with his ship, which traded to Spreadless at the mouth of the river what runs through Dinsley, and which he took me down onst in a boat, and paid, I don't know how much, to get through the locks as is made to stop the barges from getting down too cheap : a good creatur, sir, though I says it as shouldn't, was Captin James Smick," and the relict of the defunct salt began to weep tears of particular saline density, judging from the perverse way in which they would rear themselves up into formidable globules at the end of her nose, and refuse for a long time to fall over the precipice that lay between that prominent organ and her chin.

" But as you was a sayin, sir, the Winthorpes is tidy people, though proud as should be humility, when you considers

the difference of a capting to a teacher of the pianner, as Edith, which is the youngest of six, no doubt plays well, which she oughter, seeing that she has no knolidge of domestick matters, beyond a dustin of the drawink-room, which the furniture is mostly old, though good no doubt. My Joanna, sir, though I says it myseif, is more perfeck in all things pertainink to what a womin should know than all the three, which three died when they was young, leavink the three that has gone to church, and much good may they derive, though there was a time when I always went of a mornings ; but as I was sayin, Mrs. Winthorpe, which is a widder like myself, had a little property in her own right, and they lives on it pretty comfortable no doubt, though I'm not one, Mr. Martyn, as is a hadvocate for starving the belly to make the back look fine, and which maxim I ever tells Joanna to bear in mind, together with the one that booty is only skin deep, and a contented mind, and a happy disposition, and bein' able to mend your own stockins, and do

your own cookin, is more likely to win a usband than otherwise."

Jacob listened attentively, though Mrs. Smick evidently thought she detected signs of restlessness in his manner.

"No, thanky, sir, you aint a detainin of me ; I likes my lodgers when they does me the onner to consult me, and any information that I can give is welcome, I'm sure ; as I was sayin, sir, the two eldest is awful proud, sir, though what they has to be proud of beyond livin on their mother, which has a little property, when they oughter be doin somethink for themselves, it is not for me to say, though dressmakin might do something for them to help out their income, which, I believe, is small, though they did refuse to let their rooms when there was a great to do here, and all the houses was let, even to Mr. Smythe's, which he spells it with a why, because, he says, his aunt's sisters did, though I never knew them. 'I'm not proud,' he said, 'and if a ginny a night is to be the price, 'why say a ginny,' which was very hansum ;

but Edith, most people don't object to her, which she is a good deal put on by the elder ones, who is not much to look at, and has tried to get off this many a year, but which is on the shelf now ; and though she is defected in her ways, and her ankles is not so good as they might be, the youngest is not ugly. People as like dimples, which is certainly better than the pimples, which does not hiten the booty of the oldest, says she is nice lookin, and of the three, I being a young man, which of course I am not, would prefer her, but 'handsim is as andsim does,' which was a maxim that the late Captin as giv'n over his glass, which he was a temperate drinker, though his favrite toast was, " Them in our harms as we loves in our arts.' "

" Mauther ! the meat's a burnin ! " exclaimed Joanna, dashing into the room, and seizing Jacob's tray and emptying the contents into the half-open dressing-gown of Mr. Williams, just as that gentleman entered the room.

" Confound it !—shrimps and sawdust !—



Jupiter and Jumbo!—by all the gods, but this is infernally annoying,” exclaimed Mr. Williams, shaking the bread crumbs and coffee from his gown.

“She did *not* know as you were a coming, which accidents will happen in the best regulated families, and if gentlemen will lay in bed and come down in their stockin feet, they can’t expect to be heard,” said Mrs. Smick, going to the rescue of Joanna, and picking up the broken pieces.

“No, but hang it, Mrs. Smick, Joanna should not be dashing out like a flash of greasy lightning followed by a thunderbolt, and burying a fellow in cups and saucers,” and then he burst out laughing.

“I’ll pay for the damage,” said Jacob; “it was my fault for detaining you, Mrs. Smick.”

“Spoken like a gentleman, sir, which is more than I can say for some people,” Mrs. Smick replied, as she left the scene of Joanna’s misfortune.

“And so she’s been enlightening you a little about her neighbours,” said Mr.

Williams, after he had exhausted his laughter and dried his dressing-gown—"ah, and by Jove she can—talk for a week, sir—never knew anything like it, except an old landlady of mine at Pimlico (I believe Mrs. Smick was born within the sound of Bow bells), when I edited the *Slasher*, after the *Smasher* became defunct—she had talking fits—came on all of a sudden—they used to put her to bed after the first hour when they found it was really the fit—lay her on her back and let her talk—sometimes she'd go on all night as if she was wound up, and must run down like an alarum—one day she quarrelled with a cabman about a fare, and talked herself to death—fact."

"Indeed!" was Jacob's only reply.

"Well, now, I'll tell you another fact; perhaps you won't believe it; the little sketch which you wrote last week is copied, in full, by the *Sunday Post*, with this instruction: 'We take the following graphic and picturesque sketch from the *Dinsley Courant*.' Will you believe that—eh?"

"No," said Jacob, "I cannot."

"You would like to believe it—young fellows are awfully proud when they're quoted—and by the beard of the prophet, you *may* feel a touch of pride at being noticed in the *Post*. I don't say Fitzatkins, the editor, whom I know well, has not done it out of compliment to me ; but take it for what it is worth, the sketch is devilish good, as I told you, and the compliment of our London friend is deserved—there's the paper, read for yourself, while I dress for a stroll before dinner—I came down on purpose to congratulate you."

Sure enough, Williams had spoken the truth this time, at any rate. Jacob would not have been mortal if he had not felt some little gratification at the compliment paid to him by the *Post*. Looking at the prominent place assigned to his sketch, Jacob felt his heart beating a little quicker than usual, and after reading his own composition in its new place, he rose and said most emphatically to himself before Mrs. Smick's mirror : "Lucy, I will be worthy of

you yet." And just then he turned round, and saw Edith Winthorpe pass the window.


"I shall go to church," said Jacob, "in the evening."

"And I'll walk with you on your way thither."

"Come all the way, and go in too," said Jacob.

"No, my boy, I cannot to-night; to tell you the truth, I rather fancy it is one of my sermons that will be preached; I have written half a dozen for the Rev. Slocum Pantaway; and I shouldn't like to hear my own good thoughts and moral sentiments murdered by his shocking delivery—no, I will walk down the street, because I want to propound unto you something for your welfare."

And so the two walked out together. They were just the sort of men whom you would be inclined to look at twice if you had met them in the street. There was something rather "stagey" in the appearance of the elder one, with a cut of the old-



fashioned beau ; his coat blue, with brass buttons, his waistcoat a light drab, his trousers almost of the same colour, and his boots shining splendidly ; his hat, slightly the worse for] wear, stuck jauntily on one side of his head ; and the evening being rather dusty, he wore a pair of spectacles, not the green protectors which he sometimes affected ; he was marked in one or two places with the small-pox ; he had a merry eye and a trifle of whisker.

Jacob, though himself rather a dandy, was exceedingly quiet in his style compared with Mr. Williams, and he still wore a narrow band of crape round his hat ; he was about the same height as his companion, who was considered to be a little over the average standard.

On their way down the High Street they passed Miss Winthorpe, her mother, and her two sisters. Edith and her mother walked first, and Sarah and Ann, arm linked in arm, like a fond and loving pair, followed. Mr. Williams politely raised his hat to the party as he passed.

"You know the Winthorpes, then?" said Jacob.

"Just sufficiently to be polite when we meet; rather a nice girl that young one, must say; mind what you're about, sir; you'll be over head and ears in love before you know where you are, Jacob. I once knew a young fellow who fell in love with a girl in the street—she had been shopping, and was on her way home—he was in love with her at the top of the High Street, proposed at the bottom, was accepted—and a church being hard by, they went home man and wife."

"Remember that I am going to church, Mr. Williams; 'the nearer the church, the farther,' &c,—you are not particular when and where you let off your fibs," said Jacob.


"Fibs! Perhaps you do not believe what I said about the sermon. Well, we shall see, but here you are—*au revoir!* Tell me what you think of the application of the text when it comes to thirdly." And the careless and thoughtless Williams passed on his way, while his friend entered

St. Mary's, one of the five churches of Dinsley.

Jacob sat nearly opposite the Winthorpes, and twice his eyes met Edith's—and once, during the prayers, they met those of her eldest sister, who looked through him, and said “Amen” in a sneering, snappish sort of way, that reminded Jacob of one of Hogarth's pictures and a vinegar cruet: so Jacob hid his face in his book; and afterwards, despite the wheezy clerk, who began the 'responses long before the people, and finished with a croak and a gasp long after them, succeeded in feeling devout, and then in becoming very miserable and depressed. But he was a strange, romantic fellow, this Jacob Martyn; and when the service was over, he did not even glance towards the Winthorpe pew, but pushed his way out in an opposite direction, and went for a long ramble by the gaslight, until he found himself on a common, by a river in which a few stars were reflected.

It was a half-imaginary, half-real sketch of this river which had been copied into the

Post. It was the same stream that had its rise beyond Middleton. Jacob, who had wandered many an hour by its brink, and now knew many of the towns and villages which it passed on its way to the sea, embodied some of this knowledge and some of his thoughts and a good deal of happy description in a sketch entitled "From the Mountain to the Sea," which Mr. Williams had published in the manner already explained. It was a graphic sketch—something like a vigorous water-colour drawing, with a background roughly rubbed in. You could see the river, with the children coming down from the villages to dabble in the water; you could hear the water-wheel; you could see the dark sluggish stream crawling through big manufacturing towns, and then bounding off again into the meadows; farther on you had pictures of lazy barges drawn by horses; by-and-by you came to ships; then you met the salmon coming up with the tide: and after all this, you could not but feel that you had read a very natural piece of word-painting,



to say nothing of the bits of philosophy and moralising that cropped up here and there, and made the paper almost a sermon as well as a picture.

"If it were not Sunday night," said Mr. Williams, on Jacob's return, "I should advise you to write to the *Post* people and offer your services as a contributor of miscellaneous essays—been thinking the matter over as I walked home."

"Do you think there would be any good in doing so?" inquired Jacob, much more interested, I am bound to say, in this editorial hint than in the clerical advice to which he had listened in St. Mary's Church.

"Of course I do—might be the means of making your fortune—besides, the proprietors are the famous publishers, Messrs. Gingham and Co.—who knows what the result might be?"

Jacob said he would write in the morning; and forthwith he began to build more castles in the air, which, after writing to Gingham and Co. on the following day,

he furnished in gorgeous and fantastic fashion.

One of Jacob Martyn's old reporting books lies before me while I write, side by side with some careless notes from which I have transcribed a portion of this history. Mr. Pitman has much to answer for ; many a headache, many a heartache. But he has taught thousands to wield a special power. The early struggles of a beginner at shorthand reporting have been described once for all by the great master who lies under a plain slab in Westminster Abbey. Those who know the picture (and who does not ?) will understand how to sympathise with Jacob Martyn's first phonographic efforts. Here they are on my table—queer hieroglyphics even to a shorthand writer. Curves and lines and dots and stars and angles of all sorts, straggling down the centre of leaf after leaf, like Sanscrit gone mad ; with here and there a proper name written in English to show up the peculiar character of the mania. There are collectors who would give a trifle for this note-

book. What would they not give for that in which Dickens made his first House of Commons notes ? Yet who but a practical shorthand writer could understand the labour, the misery, the disappointments of which these early note-books tell. Many people write shorthand ; many people can sit at a public meeting, and, in Pitman's system or Harding's, take down word for word all that is said, but—the reading, the transcription, my friend ? “Aye, there's the rub.” Well, Jacob had long since achieved all this ; he had suffered and was strong in this respect ; and, as I said before, the proofs of his early struggles are now before me—including the very note-book in the latter pages of which he commenced the report of Magar's trial. Here and there a leaf is turned down at the commencement of an article or an essay, the leading idea of which had occurred to Jacob during some reporting peregrination. Magar's trial is adorned with a rough sketch of the prisoner at the bar. Further on there is an outline of the old bridge at Middleton,

done from memory, with an indication in the distance of the mill and the singing weir, which used to join in the factory chorus. One of the note-books contains scraps of French and German exercises and bits of Latin, with some memoranda of "Spawling's Maxims." Every page gives token of thought and study and hard work. On the last page of the latest of these reminiscences of Jacob is written, "There is no knowing what a little genius may accomplish tempered by adversity, stimulated with love, trained by perseverance."





CHAPTER V.

"UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO A QUACK."

"**Y**OU look gloomy to-night," said Windgate Williams to Jacob, who was nursing his left leg over the fire.

"I do not feel merry," was the reply.

"What's up—found a hole in your pocket—or been snubbed by that pretty girl over the way?"

"I have made an unpleasant discovery.

"You are always doing something wonderful—what is it?"

"I am under an obligation to a quack."

"Yes," said Williams, waiting for further explanation.

"A quack, and therefore a humbug,"

continued Jacob, in the same hard, deliberate tone in which he pitched his first remark.

“Strong words,” said Williams, “strong enough fifty years ago to have ended in pistols and coffee for two—getting up before sunrise—cold, damp, and miserable—twenty-five paces—bang, bang, and there you are !”

“It has only recently dawned on me,” said Jacob, “and the discovery is all the more galling because I have a sincere regard for him ; indeed I believe him to be a large-hearted, high-minded, and generous man in his way—in his way, mind you, Mr. Williams.”

“In his way, certainly,” said Williams.

“It is believed that he saved my life ; he has placed me in another matter under an eternal obligation ; and yet he is living and making money by deception, by fraud, by an imposture of the grossest kind.”

“What is it ?—out with it—what the devil are you driving at ?”

“Sir, the man who goes forth among the



ignorant multitude and sells them a pill warranted to cure every ailment that flesh is heir to, is a rascal, and may be even guilty of murder.”

“ You are surely not speaking of our friend *Moniti meliora sequamur?*”

“ I am speaking of Horatio Johnson,” said Jacob, seriously. “ What can you say of a man who deludes the sick and dying with nostrums, the effects of which he does not understand ; offers them for every disease one single medicine—some wretched combination that is foreign altogether to the malady, and while it cannot cure may possibly kill ?”

“ What can I say ? That he is not likely to do any more harm than the Faculty, nearly every member of which differs from the other about nearly every disease under the sun.”

“ I differ with you entirely.”

“ By all means, differ. The practice of medicine is a series of blunders and mistakes—doctors kill more than they cure—knew a conscientious doctor once who

rarely gave his patients anything but bread pills and coloured water."

"He was a humbug, then."

"Yes; his patients would have something to take—they would have left him to starve if he had been honest with them. Knew another fellow who mostly gave a little pale brandy disguised in some filthy bitters."

"A truce to your wise saws and modern instances; I tell you our friend Johnson is a miserable quack, and that I am under a lasting obligation to him. I will be out of it; I cannot thrive on such a foundation."

"You forget, Mr. Jacob Martyn, that Johnson is an herbalist—a shrewd man, a student of botany, and what is more, a student of human nature. Years ago the herb doctor was an important person in every town; you must not class Johnson with the common pill vendor."

"I do—I will—I must."

"You are absurd, Jacob, excuse me," said Williams warmly.

"Perhaps I am; let me be absurd. I

despise myself and the herb doctor at this moment equally. I respect Johnson as a man ; is that sufficient ?"

"It is a little better. Say you have a real regard for him apart from his pills, and then we will proceed."

"All right. I say so."

"I am satisfied."

"You are easily satisfied," said Jacob smiling ; "and now be kind enough to remit to Mr. Horatio Johnson the money which you have in hand on my account, and I will as quickly as possible forward the balance."

"Are you serious ?"


"I was never more so ; and since you do not agree with me, I must act upon my own feelings in this matter, and explain myself to Johnson in a letter."

"And the Doctor will write in reply, commencing with his favourite quotation, 'Throw physic to the dogs ;' and telling you that, as all diseases arise from impurities of the blood, one medicine is sufficient for all ; and that the Oriental is a compound

approved by some of the most eminent practitioners for that purpose."

"He will not convince me ; and I shall advise him to throw *his* physic to the dogs."

It was a severe shock to Mr. Horatio Johnson, the letter which he received from Jacob, on the morning following that red-letter night when the Doctor had inaugurated those changes in the prospects of the Titsy household with which the reader is already acquainted. His occupation had certainly never appeared to him to be as objectionable as it seemed to be in the opinion of Jacob Martyn. The letter was couched in friendly and delicate terms ; but the Doctor did not fail to comprehend it thoroughly. He brooded over it all day, and applied to his tobacco-box for advice and consolation, at such unseasonable times, that poor Mrs. Titsy began to fear he had repented of his recent proposal to her. The Doctor smoked and thought, notwithstanding ; and, in order to look at the case without prejudice, he put the



quack, who had saved the Indian officer, at the bar, tried him on the counts suggested by Jacob, and found him guilty. Then he put himself through the same ordeal, and came to the conclusion that there might be something in what Jacob said, and that he would talk the matter over with Mrs. Titsy.

The widow, in a little fluster of anxiety, heard all the Doctor had to say, and was very angry with Jacob Martyn. She called to mind, and *would* speak of them, (although the Doctor frequently bade her say no more), the many cases in which her amiable lodger had supplied many a poor family with what she called kitchen physic, as well as pills; she mentioned more than one illness, in which he had paid for professional assistance, in addition to supplies of this kitchen physic of which she made so great a point; and she wondered at Master Jacob—she would not have thought it of him!

Jacob's letter made the Doctor very uncomfortable; and, eventually, he added

to the plans already decided upon another which he thought would not only satisfy his young friend, but set at rest any scruples of conscience which had been awakened in his own breast.

In the evening, he said to Mrs. Titsy, "You are aware, Mrs. T., that I had intended to withdraw from the active prosecution of my profession" (the Doctor could not help being a little pompous) "before the arrival of that letter from my friend Mr. Martyn, whose opinion we all value."

"I am ; but I beg to say——"

"Do not say it then, my dear Mrs. Titsy ; let me have my own way this time."

"Of course, Mr. Johnson, and always," said Mrs. Titsy, a little confused, and with something like a blush on her fair plump face.

"Well, then, I shall give up this medical business altogether ; the remedy which I have vended is undoubtedly very good for very many things ; I don't think I have anything upon my conscience in the way of

having misused it ; though perhaps—but there—it needs no speech, my dear ; we will be gentleman and lady in the future, and not soil our fingers with either trade or profession. Have you any objection, Mrs. Titsy ?”

“ O dear no, sir,” said Mrs. Titsy ; and the Doctor put his arm round her waist as gently as a young lover ; but it was a comical sight to see.

The next day the Doctor received a remittance from Mr. Windgate Williams, with a note informing him that Mr. Martyn found himself so very rich, on two pounds ten a week, that he had no further use for the funds invested on his account ; and that he would shortly remit, with interest, the amount which had been expended. Mr. Williams, in a pleasant way, further suggested that his friend, Mr. Martyn, had some thoughts of starting a bank ; but he should advise him to devote his princely fortune to other purposes, though he feared that Jacob would insist upon buying up all the Dinsley Canal shares, for the express


purpose of fighting the railway, which had just been opened there, in order that the question of locomotion, its cost and expedition, might be fairly and finally settled.

Mr. Johnson, who greatly admired the loquacious Williams, was very much tickled with this communication ; but he felt miserable on account of Jacob's view of his medical career ; and more especially as he began to be more and more convinced in his own mind that there was something in what Jacob had said.

Meanwhile Jacob received a letter, which afforded him very considerable pleasure—so much so, indeed, that my young friend found it difficult to control his feelings.

“ If Mr. Martyn can make it convenient to come to town shortly, Mr. Gingham will be glad to have a personal interview with him.”

“ It has come !” said Jacob, bursting into Williams's bedroom, just as that gentle-



man was preparing to descend to breakfast.

"It has come! what has come? An earthquake, or the last day?" exclaimed Mr. Williams, starting round from the contemplation of his own face in the mirror, which had once reflected the rubicund features of the departed Smick.

"Hurrah!" was Jacob's only reply, followed by a scamper downstairs, which eclipsed in noise the commotion of the thunderbolt.

And then bang went the front door; and Mr. Williams, looking from his window, could see Jacob walking down the Grove at a brisk rate, and with an elastic, joyous step.

"An extraordinary young fellow that," soliloquised Mr. Williams. "There's something about the boy that marks him down for success—he's got it in his eye. By the powers, although I come it heavy sometimes, I can't help feeling, in that young fellow's society, that I am in superior company—lots of brain and lots

of activity. Something's up this morning—well, we shall see." And then the eccentric Mr. Williams betook himself to breakfast.

By-and-by Jacob returned, flushed and excited.

"Well—what is it?—found a gold mine?—going to be married?—matriculating for a lunatic asylum?—or have you invented a new pill?"

"Hang the pill! That is a sore subject, Williams; don't touch it."


"Very well—then what *is* the row?"

"You shall hear all in good time. Let me say, once more, *it* has come, sir; *it* has arrived; I found it lying on the breakfast table when I came down, as quietly and unassumingly as if it were the most unimportant thing possible."

"It, it, it—it, be blowed, what is *it*?" said Mr. Williams.

"That is it," said Jacob; spreading out before the editor Mr. Gingham's note.

Mr. Williams read the communication twice; and then, making a satisfactory



washing of his hands in imaginary soap and water, he rose from his seat, and walked from one end of Mrs. Smick's apartment to the other, in a fit of meditative delight.


"Jack Rugabee, come, take up your rapier and follow after mine heels to ze Court," said Jacob, taking the lead in the pacing of Mrs. Smick's apartment, and laughing heartily at Williams's gait and manner.

"'Tis ready, sir, in the porch," said the editor, immediately falling into Jacob's humour.

"But I remember me," said Williams, stopping suddenly and assuming an air of great gravity, "of something else, more *à propos* to the time, which that same wise man has writ—'There is a tide in the affairs of man'—for you, Jacob, the flood has come—launch your boat, and away you go on the top of the first wave—and you'll find a safe anchorage in the ports of Fame and Fortune—by Jove, I'm serious."

Extravagant as Jacob professed to regard the editor's hopeful picture, he could not help believing that his fortunes were decidedly looking up. But he was full of fun at his own expense. He burlesqued his hopes, by outdoing the extravagance of his friend. He talked of having had an interview with Fortunatus, and securing the wishing cap; he asked Williams if there was any particular estate he would like to buy; he wanted his opinion about the colour of a private brougham; but all this was only a cover for the ærial buildings which were really towering up in his imagination, and showing him bright, bright pictures in the future.

The day passed delightfully. Everything looked genial and sunny. Spring had gradually merged into summer, without losing the freshness and beauty that are so invigorating and hopeful when the new leaves first appear. Jacob's thoughts and feelings were in harmony with the time. Even his dingy office looked sunny, and his work was so much like play, that



he had finished it and started off for a ramble in the fields, long before the editor was on his way home.

Sent for to London! his ambitious dreams returned full upon him and gave inspiration to his thoughts. The famous letter had given his whole nature such a fillip, that he felt there was nothing he could not do to secure a footing in the great city, where prizes were to be fought for and won.

When he reached the Grove once more, soft-flowing harmonies were stealing out into the sunshiny air from the upper window of the Winthorpes; and Jacob sat listening and wondering, and almost fearing that the player was becoming as interesting to him as the music.

Edith Winthorpe had touched his sympathies. She was evidently not happy. Her elder sisters were both jealous of her good looks and her great abilities. He was sure of this without Mrs. Smick's information; and he thought how delightful

it would be to champion such a Cinderella. If he had never known Lucy, he would like to have been a prince for the sake of Edith.






CHAPTER VI.

JACOB STANDS ON THE THRESHOLD OF HIS
FUTURE.

HE stood where his father had contemplated his own fate years before ; he stood at the door of the Covent Garden hotel as the evening shadows were beginning to fall in a dirty grey upon the great city. Jacob had arrived in town that day—arrived by train, and been bumped and jolted to his hotel in a cab. Since his arrival he had dined ; dined where his father had eaten, and called for his bill and paid it with the conviction that this was his last journey to London. Jacob did not know how his father had suffered during that visit to

town when Jacob addressed him by letter to this hotel and hoped he might some day see the modern Babylon ; Jacob did not know how sad and forlorn and heart-broken his father had been on that last day in London ; but he knew that Mr. Bonsall, the member for Middleton, was morally guilty of his financial difficulties, and therefore of his death. The fact troubled Jacob as he stood contemplating sundry loads of cabbages, a couple of cabs, and some children feeding on the garbage of the locality. He put an imaginary stone in his pocket for Mr. Bonsall, then pulled himself together, smoked vigorously ; and it was a quaint fancy in his mind that he was on the threshold of his future, and that he would knock at the door boldly demanding admission.

Jacob knew nothing of London by experience. He had read it up and dreamed of it often enough, and pictured himself among the crowd clearing his way for Lucy's sake ; but that was in the old days. Lucy had been beforehand with him and



had found a key that opened all thoroughfares, a talisman that made the crowd give way and make a passage for her. He had an appointment in Paternoster Row the next day; he knew that was near St. Paul's; he would go and reconnoitre the locality. "To the left and keep straight down the Strand, under Temple Bar, cross the Farringdon Road, up Ludgate Hill, and there you are, sir," said the waiter; "all in a straight line, can't miss it, sir."

The lamplighters were just dotting the Strand with feeble stars as Jacob entered it from Southampton Street; the shops were illuminated for the night; the famous thoroughfare was all alive with traffic. The scene was new to Jacob, and it impressed him with a sense of loneliness. While every shop window had attractions for him, the traffic was bewildering. Temple Bar pulled him up. He could not pass it without a multitude of thoughts rushing in upon him. The national history of the spot did not haunt him so much as the figure of the great Dr. Johnson attending his lady

visitors to their carriages amidst a little crowd of curious people gathered round the stalwart form in Fleet Street. Then Jacob's imagination filled itself with the famous men who had stood hereabouts having only the traditional shilling in their pockets; with the illustrious toppers of "The Mitre Tavern" and "The Cock;" and with visions of Goldsmith and Garrick, which stretched out to the days of "rare Ben Jonson" and his companions who frequented "The Devil Tavern" on the site of "The Rainbow." But Jacob found it impossible to stand and think and dream here; the crowd hustled him, and asked him where he was "a shovin to;" he therefore hurried on with the rest, and in due time found himself in the shadow of St. Paul's. Strange are the tricks of memory. All Jacob could think about in presence of this glorious structure was an incident in a work of fiction popular with Susan Harley in Jacob's early youth, wherein the exploits of a celebrated highwayman and one Jonathan Wild were narrated with a sensational power

that had been sufficient to frighten both Jacob and Susan in those long past days anterior to the appearance of Mrs. Gompson at Middleton.

Among the adventures related in this now well-remembered work, Jacob called to mind how the gentleman robber had entered St. Paul's with his band, early in the morning, to the horror and astonishment of the beadle, for the purpose of securing the register of the marriage of the highwayman's father with a duchess ; and how the military had tracked the robbers into the church, and finally had a battle with them in the crypt ; and how, when a great crowd had been collected outside by the report of fire-arms, the gentleman highwayman, after defeating the foe, had come forth with his band, successfully deceiving the crowd outside by pretending to be a prisoner to one of his gang, who cheered lustily, and told the crowd of their great capture.

Having been round St. Paul's and satisfied himself concerning the locality of "the

Row," Jacob began again to feel creeping over him that sense of loneliness which strangers invariably experience in great cities. He returned and walked back again down Ludgate Hill, like one in a dream, eventually crossing Trafalgar Square, and passing by the very spot where his father had walked with his heart-breaking trouble.


Presently Jacob found his way impeded by a great crowd. On inquiry, he learned that he was in front of a famous theatre, and that this was the benefit night of an eminent actor. Jacob therefore determined to do what the crowd did ; and in a few minutes he found himself carried away into the pit, where he took a seat near two elderly people, who almost immediately began to talk about the drama, as it was in their younger days, and to regret that as the great old actors died out so few great young ones sprung up.

Gradually the pit became crowded, and the dress circle and boxes began to fill up gaily, budding from a few bright hues into quite a *parterre* of gorgeous dresses, in-

creasing from one or two groups into throngs of fashionable people, who, after a great deal of preparation, settled themselves down into their seats, as if with a full determination of remaining there for a long time. Then the lights in the great chandelier, which hung over Jacob's head, suddenly became more brilliant, until the whole house radiated with a warm and ruddy glow. This was accompanied by a few bars of solemn music from the orchestra (the members of which had, for some little time, been dropping in one by one), gradually swelling into stirring music, which set Jacob's pulses beating wildly, and formed a fitting prelude to a world of poetry and romance that seemed to open up before him as the curtain gradually rose upon the first scene of the most complete and beautiful comedy ever written.

It had never occurred to Jacob to look at a bill of the play; he was too much occupied with everything else; and so much in a dream of wonder and hope about the great future, into which he felt

he was entering, that he was content to sit there quietly and dreamily, and accept all that occurred. When he discovered by the text what the representation was, his thoughts, however, immediately wandered away from the theatre to the school at Cartown, where Spenzonian Whiffler had commenced his study of Shakespeare, under the great-hearted mysterious schoolmaster. To-morrow, he thought, he might see that same Spen, for he had written to the General Post Office, and requested his school companion to meet him at the hotel. Then Rosalind entered, and Jacob could not help thinking of Lucy, more especially as Rosalind's appearance, her fair bright face and light hair and musical voice, reminded him of her who used to lure him away from rambles with Spen on pilgrimages through leafy woods in summer. Jacob's thoughts were suddenly recalled from these memories by a burst of applause, that was renewed again and again, while a figure, in motley, stood bowing upon the stage. This was Touchstone, represented



by a gentleman who was evidently a great favourite.

Jacob applauded with the rest ; but he did so in memory of Cartown and Spen, and almost with tears in his eyes, because this was one of Spen's favourite parts in those latter days, when the schoolmaster opened the magic book, up in the little room that was adorned with the theatrical pictures. "London with thy thousand wonders," thought Jacob, "I would freely sacrifice all, for one day at Cartown in the happy, happy times !"

The play went on, and no sooner did Touchstone begin to speak, than Jacob could have sworn he was listening to Spen himself. This must be mere folly ; he rubbed his eyes, and looked and listened again. "Yes, yes ! it is, it is !" at length he exclaimed aloud ; only to be confused and confounded by a cry of "Order, order !" and a consciousness that a great number of eyes had been suddenly turned upon him. He held down his head and waited until the curtain fell on the first act. Then he

borrowed his neighbour's bill, and saw that he must be mistaken. He read that the performance of the evening was for the benefit of Mr. Paul Ferris, upon which occasion he was "to be supported by his eminent tutor, Mr. Liston Dudley (his first appearance since his retirement from the stage twenty years ago):—Jacques, Mr. Liston Dudley; Touchstone, Mr. Paul Ferris."

Although Jacob found that Touchstone was played by Mr. Paul Ferris and not by Mr. Spen Whiffler, he fully believed that the wit of Cartown school was here before him, enjoying the realisation of those dreams of ambition in which he had so often indulged, when mixing Indian ink at the pump on mapping days, or rambling through the Cartown meadows. The fifth scene confirmed him: for whose sad yet benignant face was that which turned a sorrowful smile of recognition when the applause shook the chandelier, but Mr. Spawling's?

Jacob was almost beside himself with



astonishment and delight. He clapped his hands and cried "Bravo!" till he was hoarse. The two old playgoers were astonished at the young man's enthusiasm, though the whole house was moved with joy. Ladies waved their handkerchiefs; bouquets and flowers were showered upon the stage from every box; the pit rose to its feet, rose *en masse*, close up to the orchestra, and cheered frantically. Presently the rich deep voice spoke—

"More, more, I prythee, more!"

How well Jacob remembered those kind yet melancholy tones! There were many others in this theatre who had not forgotten them; men who were growing old, and who fancied they were young again, now that they heard once more a voice which carried them back for a quarter of a century, when Liston Dudley was the delight of the play-going world.

As the action of the play went on Jacob could not help likening the woods near Cartown to the forest of Arden; especially

when the Jacques of the latter was the philosopher of the former—the teacher who had guided his mind with fine maxims and noble thoughts in pleasant rambles through rural glades and woody mazes. “Many a time and oft,” too, had Jacob heard that epitome of life—“All the world’s a stage,” spoken by the schoolmaster ; but never had the picture seemed so striking as now, every fresh phase of “the seven ages,” stamping his imagination with a vignette, as perfect as if limned by the painter’s art.

The applause was like the rattle of falling water, and it continued for many minutes.

Then came the song of Amiens ; and once again the old time and the old sensations and the old thoughts agitated Jacob so much, that he would fain have rushed into the street to compose himself ; but that might not be, for the theatre was too crowded to admit of any single person forcing a passage out.

Jacob was, therefore, compelled to sit



as calmly as his agitated feelings would permit, until Rosalind spoke the epilogue and the theatrical gates were shut upon the forest paradise.

The enthusiasm of the audience now knew no bounds. In deference to it the curtain went up upon all the performers; then Jacques and Touchstone, with Rosalind between them, came before the curtain, and it was with difficulty that Spen gathered up all the bouquets, and loaded the lady's kirtle with them.

Then there was a loud call for Jacques, who came forward to the footlights, and in a voice tremulous with emotion expressed his gratitude for the kindness of the audience.

"My dear friends," he said, "your generous recognition overwhelms me. My desertion of you without explanation makes your forgiveness more than kind; I shall never forget it. Twenty years have passed. It was a painful event that dragged me from you. I am an old man now."

The actor spoke in disjointed sentences, and with an evident desire to say something that he could not quite express. Whenever he paused the house applauded him with a strange sympathetic earnestness.

"During my exile, Fortune was kind to me. It threw in my way a pupil who awakened some of the old feelings (applause); awakened a love of my early profession so warmly that I am here (cheers). Paul Ferris has reunited the broken links; he brought me here to-night to share these honours which he is modest enough to say you have showered upon him in memory of me. My dear friends, this reunion has cast a sunbeam on the autumnal path of age (cheers). My tongue is not eloquent. I cannot say all or half what I feel. Permit me to say 'Farewell.' (Cries of "No, no," and applause. A voice: "God bless you, Dudley.") Dear friends, Farewell!

'I were but little happy if I could say how much.'

Farewell! Farewell!"

The applause broke out afresh as the old actor retired ; and there were tears in many other eyes beside those of Jacob Martyn.

Jacob now made the best of his way to the door. Half-stifled, and under the influence of a variety of strong emotions, he made his way from the pit to the box entrance, and there inquired how he could send his card to Mr. Ferris. He was directed to the stage door, which, after many inquiries, Jacob found at the top of a damp mildewy alley.

Following sundry shabby people, Jacob entered the door pointed out to him, and found himself in the august presence of the stage porter.

"Can I send my card to Mr. Paul Ferris?" inquired Jacob.

"He's just gone on in the second piece," said the porter (a fat inquisitive thick-headed looking fellow) over the half-door which barred egress to his den, and enabled him to see who passed and repassed.

"My business with him is of the utmost importance," said Jacob, deferentially.

"Has Mr. Simmons nearly done?" said a slip-shod woman, thrusting herself before Jacob.

"No, he ain't," said the porter.

"Will you tell him little Jane's very bad, and he's to come home quick?" said the woman, hurriedly.

"Worse to-night, then?" inquired the porter, sinking his voice.

"Very bad," said the woman, "we fear she'll not get the night over."

"Here, you," said the porter, calling to a boy who was passing; "tell Mr. Simmons that he's wanted at home as soon as he can get away."

Woman and boy disappeared, and Jacob resumed his business.

"What would you advise me to do, sir?" said he pacifically and respectfully, for he felt that he had only to win the porter's interest to do almost what he pleased.

"You wish to send to Mr. Ferris?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"Merely my card, and a message that Mr. Martyn is waiting."

"Would you like to step in out of the draught?"

Jacob stepped in out of the draught, and did all he could to open up a conversation with the porter, but this stage Argus devoted his chief attention to a kettle on a few smouldering cinders, and to a conversation about canaries with an old fellow who had just limped in.

Jacob had, therefore, plenty of time to examine the disorderly apartment in which he had been so fortunate as to obtain a seat. It presented to the eye a strange conglomeration of litter—two tables, a bench, two chairs, a glue-pot, a battered fender, a broken poker, an empty bottle, a yellow jug, a box, a number of old playbills, several dirty newspapers, a greasy book, a hammer, and other miscellaneous articles; besides several notices, in bad writing, hanging from the dirty walls, one of which notices particularly attracted Jacob's attention.

It informed daring and presumptuous authors that the management of this

theatre would not be responsible for the return of any manuscripts which might be left there for consideration. Jacob little thought how many hope-sick Triplets had looked at that sign, with tears in their eyes, and begged like suppliant slaves for a letter about their plays, which, if only enacted, would make the fortune of the house !

Men, women, and children passed and repassed Jacob as he stood in the porter's room. They were all busy and shabby, most of them were merry, some of them carried jugs of beer, some had mysterious parcels under their aprons. Jacob could hear the rumbling of scenery in the distance, and the faint echoes of applause and laughter in the house. The farce had just begun.

"What's the message, Tom?" presently said a man, thrusting his head over the porter's half-door. The questioner was very profusely painted, and dressed in a gaudy Spanish suit.

"Is that Mr. Simmons?" said the porter,

rising from his knees after a fruitless attempt to rouse the fire into a sufficient heat to warm the kettle.

"Yes, be quick—I shall be called in a moment. What's the news?"

"Well, it's bad—little Jànè is worse."

"Poor darling!" said the actor, with a sigh that was pitiful; and then Jacob heard a voice say, "Mr. Simmons called," and the player was gone.

"Is that the father of the sick child?" Jacob ventured to inquire.

"Aye, poor fellow!" said the old man, who had been talking about canaries, "he only lost his wife six months since, and he's playing a comic lover—do you hear the house, how it's laughing? Mr. Ferris has got him by the ear now, after discovering him in a cupboard, where a domestic is supposed to have hidden him. A pleasant situation while your heart's breaking about a dying baby! Ah! thank God, I've given over work, and have neither chick nor child!"

At this moment a figure leaned over the porter's door, which attracted everybody's


attention. The old man rose respectfully from his seat ; the porter bowed obsequiously ; and Jacob Martyn fixed his eyes upon Mr. Spawling of Cartown, who was no other than Mr. Liston Dudley of London. But how altered now that he was off the stage ! Before the footlights he had looked younger than when Jacob knew him at Cartown ; but now the wrinkles in his face were all to be seen, his bushy eyebrows were as white as snow. His mouth was a little more sunken, the chin slightly more prominent ; but there remained all the former benignant expression.

“Do you know if my cab is ready ?” inquired Mr. Dudley.

“It is, sir,” said a voice from behind, and Jacob’s old friend was about to turn away.

“Stay, sir, a moment, if you please,” said Jacob, advancing and opening the half-door. “Do you not know me ?”

“Your voice is familiar to me,” said Mr. Spawling, slowly ; “but my sight is not so good as it was ; come a little nearer.”



Jacob advanced ; and, unable any longer to endure the vacant gaze of his old friend, he suddenly seized him by the hand and pronounced his own name.

Then the great actor knew him, and the joy at this unexpected meeting was mutual.

"Why, what a fine fellow you have grown," exclaimed the old man, "and 'bearded like the pard.'"

"Not exactly," said Jacob, laughing at this sally at certain signs of manliness on the lower part of Jacob's face.

"Well, we will not stand gossiping here," said Mr. Spawling ; "come home with me. I have refused a score of invitations to supper, and declined also to take any one home, feeling that I must rest and get this excitement over ; but you will help me ; we shall go back to the country, if not actually, at least in imagination ; come along," and turning to the porter and putting something in his hand, he said : "Tell Mr. Ferris to follow us immediately—tell him that Mr. Jacob Martyn and his

friend Mr. Spawling have gone to sup with Mr. Dudley."

Jacob's old friend smiled at his own joke ; and presently he and Jacob were being driven through the busy streets to the north side of Regent's Park, where Mr. Liston Dudley and his pupil lived in happy companionship together.





CHAPTER VII.

RETURNS ONCE MORE TO THE GROVE, WHERE
JACOB NARRATES HIS LONDON ADVENTURES
TO MR. WINDGATE WILLIAMS.

“**S**O you found the tide at the flood,
as I predicted ?” said the Dins-
ley editor, sticking a glass in
his eye, and looking admiringly
at Jacob over the steam of a hot glass of
grog.

“ Yes ; and I had some adventures on
the rapid current,” said Jacob.

“ First about Ginghems—let’s have it
brief and pointed, like an epigram.”

“ They accepted my sketches ; the title
which *they* liked best was the one *you* liked
best—‘ On the Track of a Sunbeam.’ ”

"Bravo! go on—go on, favoured of Fortune."

"Two hundred pounds, and something more in case it proves as successful as they think it may be."

"Hurrah—go it, Midas!"

"A guinea for every column I write for the *Post*—they must be sketches of places or of character."

"Yes, Cræsus—yes, gold-coiner, yes, yes."

Windgate Williams rose from his seat, and contemplated Jacob closely. Jacob, in his turn, smoked and looked calmly up into his friend's inquiring eyes.


"No humbug, Jacob?"

"None at all—truth, sir; no romancing."

"Go on, then."

"An engagement to go into Wales and finish a book commenced by a poor fellow who died after the first fifty pages were written."

"Why, people are actually dying that you may inherit! You've not been up to the 'Faust' trick—no, you are too young



for that—once knew a fellow who tried to sell himself to the devil. But what is this Welsh book ?”

“ ‘The Romantic History of the Welsh.’ ”

“ To be followed by the ‘ Romantic History of Jacob Martyn ? ’ ”

“ All in good time,” said Jacob. “ A cynical fellow whom I met at Ginghems’—I had luncheon there—a seedy fellow ; an Oxford man, I think, and a doctor—very clever he seemed—he told me I had better be a shoeblack than a literary man ; my end would be sure to be miserable.”

“ You will be an exception, Jacob.”

“ The doctor said perhaps that was my idea ; all men thought themselves exceptions ; every man thought every other man mortal but himself, and so on.”

“ True ; but you are the exception, Jacob.”

“ The seedy doctor—he was really a nice fellow, but awfully cynical—said how could I expect to meet a better fate than Cervantes, Spenser, Otway, Butler, Dryden ? I said we lived in better days. He

laughed and said I was young and hopeful, and that the sun had broken in upon my path early ; but I had better go and sweep a crossing, for the cloud and the storm and the tempest would soon be upon me."

" Ah, he was a disappointed man—but a struggle in London is no joke. To be a bookseller's hack is to drag a chain on an empty stomach—lots of clever men starving in London. Sometimes taverns ruin them—but, poor devils ! a drink and a chat constitute their chief pleasure ; and so many pretend they are doing well when they are dying of chagrin and want of food. Ah, Jacob—you are a lucky dog !"

" Then you think I have had no troubles ?"

" None, sir, none."

" Very well ; I will not argue the point. Do you know Piccadilly ?"

" I do. Once dined with Lord de Withers—had a house near the Duke of Allcourt's place—not far from Hyde Park Corner."

" Yes, all right," said Jacob ; " I had a call to make in Piccadilly."

“ Indeed ! More triumphs ? ”

“ No, the lady had gone abroad.”

Jacob's voice trembled just a little. He was trying to be cool. He wanted to talk about Lucy. By this means he thought he might get the image of that dear face out of his mind. It was his only secret from Williams. He had almost given up hoping that Lucy would still think of him. If he could only have been told that she was married he would have gone with a damaged heart to Edith Winthorpe, and looked for complete repairs in time. But for his wonderful success in the Row, and the vista of distinction which it opened before him, he would not have dared to ring the Thornton bell. He did it in a moment of desperation. He was almost glad there was no one at home.

“ The lady ? ” said Williams.

“ I will tell you that incident some other time,” said Jacob, knocking the ashes of his cigar into the fire.

“ Now ; no time like the present.”

“ Not now, thank you,” said Jacob.

"By-and-by. There is something else that will be quite as interesting to you. I have often talked to you about Mr. Spawling and Spen Whiffler?"

"Yes, and I know them by heart, school-master and merriman—clown and Shakespeare—Petroski and ghost—friend came at last—and all that."

"I saw them in London."

"Of course—everybody sees everybody in London—Spen on the stage, of course."

"Yes, and *entre nous*, Mr. Spawling too."

"Poor old boy—doing the old man, eh? —ah! old men should be able to leave the stage when they are themselves literally in the sere and yellow leaf. 'Superfluous lags——,' &c."

"No; I'll tell you a secret, Williams—a bit of real romance. Have you ever heard of Mr. Liston Dudley?"

"Heard of him—aye, marry that have I—and seen him—great man, sir—left the stage twenty years ago."

"He is my Mr. Spawling," said Jacob, thrusting his hands into his pockets and



gazing at Windgate, with the satisfaction of one who communicates startling news.

"No, no—come, no chaff."

"I tell you Mr. Spawling is Mr. Liston Dudley; and that Spen Whiffler is Mr. Paul Ferris, who is such an immense favourite in London."

"By all the Fates, but that's a wonderful story!—you will perhaps believe some of my anecdotes now."

"I saw Spen on his benefit night; Mr. Spawling played Jacques to his Touchstone."

"Well, go on with your romance, *as you like it*, but don't chaff me."

"I am telling you the truth in every particular; I supped with them, and the next morning carried a letter of introduction and recommendation from Mr. Liston Dudley to Gingham's."

"Marvellous!—the whole thing has been specially arranged—the tide was not only at the flood, but there was a big ship ready fitted out and loaded to your hands—a sort of 'Arabian Nights' affair."

"Spen and I went to the General Post Office and found two letters there, besides the one I wrote before I started for town. Spen had called so frequently, during a couple of years, for letters and found none, that he had given me up; I had treated his instructions, you know, as a good joke, and when I discovered my own stupidity, it was too late."

"You are too much in the habit of treating things, which you consider extraordinary, as good jokes—that affair of mine with the Prussian Count and the swindler—aye, and other incidents of London life—but you'll get over that kind of scepticism."

"No doubt; but stay a moment; I have not finished yet. You will never guess whom I met at the hotel in the evening."

"An acquaintance—a friend—an enemy—or what?"

"He can scarcely be said to belong to either category, though he swears he will be my friend."

"Of course—to him that hath shall be

given—but name, name—who is the *gallant homme ?*”

“ Do you remember the jolly, pompous magistrate of Middleton, Squire Northcotes ?”

“ Yes, with a lively recollection of the fear of being brought before him for the *Star* affair.”

“ I found him sitting over whiskey punch in a lonely corner of the coffee-room ; we exchanged looks of curiosity for some little time, which ended in mutual recognition. You remember my telling you of the interview I had with him.”

“ Yes ; the Fates preserve him !”

“ He reminded me of it, made me give him my address, and promise to call and see him whenever I visited Middleton.”

“ I always told you he was good at the bottom—funny and pompous, I grant you—not over refined—shows a most laudable desire, moreover, to wipe out any little injustice to the father by kindness to the son. Well, Jacob, I congratulate you with all my heart, and when you rise to be a

very great man, don't forget poor old Windgate Williams, who might also have been something more than he is, if he had had half your industry ; though he never found out, as you have done, the exact time when the tide was at the flood—if he *had* made that discovery he would have found no ship to embark in—and supposing he had found the ship, he would have been wrecked before he was fairly out of port. Fortune never did anything for Windgate Williams—perhaps she was right—but believe me I am happy in your success—God bless you, Jacob Martyn, God bless you !” The Dinsley Editor was overcome at the contemplation of Jacob's success. “ I must go into the next room and compose my feelings,” he said.

“ Do so, my dear sir,” Jacob replied, patting his friend on the shoulder.

The Editor retired, and Jacob sat down to answer a letter from Dr. Johnson, which had been placed in his hands that morning.

Mrs. Smick interfered with Jacob's epis-

tolary work by stepping in to make some trivial inquiry, and remaining to discover, if possible, the secret of Jacob's recent sudden journey, which she had reason to fear threatened her with the loss of a lodger.

Jacob speedily confirmed Mrs. Smick's fears ; and that voluble lady wept over the prospect of Mr. Martyn's departure.

It was just as her dear Smick so often said, which his remarks were always naturally good, that you no sooner got used to a thing, not that she meant Mr. Martyn was a thing, but the remark was allegorical, as poor Smick used to say, and no sooner did you get use to it than you lost it. Never had she had a gentleman, who more behaved himself as sich, though Mr. Williams was very kind, and all that, which it were not for a poor widow to undervalue, but she should never have felt his leaving her as she would Mr. Martyn.

Jacob soothed his landlady by a glowing eulogium of her kindness and attention since he had had the pleasure of living at the Grove.

After a few more tears, Mrs. Smick continued her discourse.

“It is not as I wish to make mischief, which were never a weakness of anybody belonging to me, but if you have told that Edith Winthorpe——”

“*That* Edith Winthorpe ! I really do not see why you should speak of the young lady in that manner,” said Jacob, turning a reproachful look upon Mrs. Smick.

“Well, of course it is not for me to question people’s likes and dislikes, and if you prefer it, Mr. Martyn, I will drop the subject.”

“You may please yourself about that, Mrs. Smick,” said Jacob, curtly.

“Well, I’ll say no more, but it does seem strange that two young people, who have made eyes at each other so long, should be both tired of the Grove at the same time : but I wish you good night, sir.”

Mrs. Smick, after drying her crocodile tears, swept out of the room with a majestic air that both puzzled and amused him.

Her strange words were soon forgotten



in his plans for the future. Having answered Mr. Johnson's letter, Jacob drew his chair towards the fire and wondered. He looked back to the days of the factory angel; he saw Middleton in the red embers of the fire; he walked up the long straggling street from the bridge, and into the little back garden; he heard the factory hymn; he saw that dear face at the window; he sat beside the mail driver, and wandered in the woods of Cartown; he watched a lovely girl gathering apples; he heard the clock beating away the moments during that last day in her dear society; he saw himself a wanderer in high-ways and by-ways; he saw the frost and snow, and the ice-bound river of his hopes, and now, lo! the sunshine was coming. If he could know one thing he would be the happiest fellow in all the world. Oh! for a real magician's glass in which he might see the face of her who should be his wife!



CHAPTER VIII.

OF CERTAIN EMIGRANTS ON BOARD THE
" HESPERUS ;" AND CONCERNING A WELL-
KNOWN MELODY THAT LED TO A BLISS-
FUL DISCOVERY.

BY the kindness of Mr. Williams, Jacob was enabled at once to throw up his Dinsley engagement ; and, on the invitation of Mr. Horatio Johnson (with whom Mr. Williams had recently spent a day at Middleton), he took Liverpool on his way into the Principality of Wales, for the purpose of bidding adieu to a party of emigrants in whose welfare he was deeply interested.

It was a calm summer night, when Jacob and the Doctor, and Mrs. Horatio Johnson, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Titsy, sat in a corner of the best cabin of the *Hesperus*, bound to Canada. The moonlight was streaming in upon them through the cabin window; Mrs. Johnson was plying her knitting needles, and looking up occasionally to make a remark; the Doctor was detailing to Jacob his views about the future, and the comparative ease with which money begot money in the colonies; Tom was listening to the Doctor, and smiling at Susan; while Jacob was wishing them all sorts of success and happiness whenever a lull occurred in the conversation, and exacting promises of frequent letters.

The parting hour came at last. Mrs. Johnson, though in her heart she could not altogether forgive Jacob, for we know what, joined in the general feeling of sorrow at leaving him; but happy in their own goodness and honest affection, not one of the four had any regrets in setting out for a

new home far away from scenes with which were associated so many bitter memories. Jacob took his leave with much real emotion ; and an hour afterwards stood gazing at a ship that was disappearing in the moonlight, to be followed by other vessels which other people would look after and wave handkerchiefs at, and weep about, and dream of in the silent watches of the night.

On the following afternoon Jacob arrived at the first stage in his Welsh expedition, and found at the post-office, Neathville, according to prior arrangement, a bundle of proofs of his first book. To read these was, at that time, a labour of love indeed, even though the labour continued long after the sun had disappeared, and the moon had risen again—the same moon that was looking down on the emigrant ship, and making long white tracks on the distant ocean which now rolled between Jacob and his old friends.


Neathville was a quiet, mossy old place, with the sea in front, and on every other side

a country studded with gray ruins of old walls and castles, the histories of which are a rich mine of instruction, poetry, and romance. The Flemish found the town a fishing village, and, struck with its many natural advantages, settled there, and, assisted by Norman allies, fortified the place; but the Welsh many years afterwards surprised the settlers, put them to the sword, and razed the fortifications to the ground. From that period (somewhere about the eleventh century), until after the advent of Oliver Cromwell, the history of Neathville had been one of great interest—a story of war and tribulation, of piracy and bloodshed, of sack and famine, of heroism and bravery; and in all quarters the antiquary could lay his fingers upon some fine memento of the greatness and the littleness of past ages. There was an old castle; a gray church, filled with quaint memorials; some ruined walls, the remains of a priory; two medicinal springs, and a variety of other attractions; besides a long picturesque fringe of rocks which skirted the

bay and ran out, hard and jagged, into the sea.

At the period of my story, the fine sandy beach was not the promenade of fast gentlemen from town, looking through eyeglasses at fast ladies from the same place ; nor had the donkey driver made his appearance there. At the most fashionable hour in the day, Jacob saw only a few groups of people on the immense tract of beach which stretched away until it seemed to join the clouds at a rocky point, where many a ship had been lured to destruction in the dark days of the wreckers.

Musing over his own thoughts, which were chiefly occupied with the design of writing a full explanation of his position to Lucy, and endeavouring to fix an interview which should be final "for weal or woe," Jacob was returning home one evening not long after his arrival at Neathville, when, as if in response to the yearning of his heart, there fell upon his ear the faint melody of a strain so familiar to him, that at first he thought it but the creation of his own fancy.




A treacherous memory and a strong imagination will sometimes play curious tricks with the senses ; but Jacob was soon convinced that the music which he heard was no trick of the fancy, but blissful reality. It stole over the rocks, in undulating cadences, and transported him back to bygone days, as completely as though he had been under some such spell as Mesmer might have worked, taking the reason prisoner, and planting the mind with whatever picture the enchanter willed. Jacob was again in the garden at Middleton, with the morning sun shining upon him, and the falling waters, and the songs of birds.

There is a happy land,
Far, far away.

High over the rocks above him, from a noble castellated house, came the well-known music. As Jacob listened, all the sensations of hope and fear and doubt and dread which he had felt when he looked on the footprints in the snow at Cartown, came back for the moment to

replace the first thoughts of the old home, and the garden-paradise. There was only one voice which could sing that song so`sweetly, so plaintively. A harp accompaniment added to the effect of the dear old melody, and with the murmur of the sea, as a deep bass, and Jacob's own strong imagination and memories of happy times, my readers will readily believe that the music was an attraction which Jacob did not desire to resist.

To go round by the regular path, to reach the house situated on the summit of the rocks, were a tedious process indeed for Jacob in his present mood. Straight to the house, whence the music came, was his only course. Away he went with the alacrity of a practised climber. There had been a time when his mind would not, under similar circumstances, have strayed for a moment from the object of his climbing; but now that he was an author, the demon of "copy," which sometimes startles writers at all hours, suggested to him, what a capital situation it would be, supposing he




were writing a story out of his own experiences, to make himself fall over the rocks and be discovered by his mistress just in time to save his precious life, and with the timely aid to receive an assurance of her eternal love.

Jacob did not fall, although his path was made additionally dangerous by the starting up, here and there, of flocks of sea-birds, which, filling the air with their peculiar cries, compelled him to pause and listen for the music to the source of which he was hurrying. He had scarcely reached the summit of the rocks when the melody changed to a new and an unknown one; but, a few moments afterwards, when he had stepped aside from the full view of the room with its tall windows opening out upon a lawn, Jacob detected in the new song some simple words which he had written for Lucy Cantrill, when he was a schoolboy and had dreams by the Cartown river.

I have said that the windows were wide open. Screening himself behind a figure of Neptune, which stood in the centre of

the lawn, Jacob looked into the room, as an erring mortal, tempted by Naiad strains, might have gazed into some sea-beat grot. How like, and yet how unlike his Lucy, was the lady who now sat conjuring from a Welsh harp music that Ariel might have made in Prospero's island!

Jacob's heart told him quickly enough who the musician was. Still the old times did not seem so distinct, now that he looked upon her again, as they had appeared when he heard the factory hymn coming over the rocks ten minutes previously. *Then* he had thought of Lucy as he saw her under the apple tree in Cantrill's little garden by the wood; of Lucy in her straw hat, simple bodice, and provincial skirts, walking by his side with just sufficient coquettishness to fill him full of doubts and fears, and excite the wish that he were old enough to marry her, lest perchance some more gallant knight should carry her off. Now he saw another Lucy, and yet the same. The soft blue eyes as of yore, the sweet full lip, the hair



a shade darker, the figure taller, and that of a woman. It was Lucy refined, not so much by fashion as by education, and the effect of living in an aristocratic atmosphere; it was the beautiful girl of the old times grown into the lovely woman, and bearing all the impress of the Great Artist's finishing touches.

By-and-by the hand which had wandered over the strings fell gently by the performer's side, and the lady looked upwards; it seemed to Jacob that her eyes were fixed upon him. A moment previously he had hurriedly decided to present himself at the house in the usual manner, and inquire for Miss Thornton, fearing that the more romantic fashion of walking in at the window, after a scramble over the rocks would alarm her. But that might not be, for Lucy came forth, passed across the lawn, close by where he stood, and, leaning over the terrace which surmounted the rocks, looked pensively out to sea. Jacob felt that he could not escape without attracting her attention. He walked quietly towards her,

and with his heart beating a wild tattoo, he whispered "Lucy."

The lady turned upon him with a startled, doubtful look. Jacob stretched forth his arms, and in another moment Mr. Caven-dish Thornton's matrimonial schemes were scattered to the winds for ever.

* * * *

Jacob went to his hotel that night the happy fellow of whom he had once or twice only ventured to dream. He had told Lucy his story, and she had spoken something of her own. He needed no confession of her love. Of her truth and constancy he had sufficient evidence in the singing of those simple words, which had been a boyish tribute to her in the golden days of Cartown. He was certainly puzzled to know why she had not received his letters; though he was hardly surprised that her inquiries concerning himself had been unsuccessful. He cared little or nothing about these minor circumstances now. He could not, however, help noticing that they seemed greatly to disturb Lucy, who made

him promise to make inquiries concerning the letters which he had addressed to her at Cartown. He fulfilled this promise at once, and by the same post wrote to Ginghems to say that he should not be prepared to send "copy" for the Welsh work so quickly as he had at first anticipated. Neathville, he said, had charmed him almost beyond description. He should never be sufficiently grateful to Messrs. Gingham for sending him into Wales. A world of romance had been opened up to him. They would be surprised when he told them of his great discovery in the Principality. Jacob chuckled at the hidden waggery of his letter. He wrote a most mad epistle to Windgate Williams, who really feared that Jacob's success had suddenly turned his head.





CHAPTER IX.

A STORM ON THE WELSH COAST.

THE reader was prepared by a conversation between Lucy and Dorothy for Miss Thornton's departure from London. The belle of the season had either grown tired of the restraints of Mayfair ; or she had seriously felt her educational deficiencies ; or she was bored by the Hon. Max Walton ; or she had a severe relapse into Jacob Martynism. I am hardly in a position to explain the young lady's reasons for her almost sudden determination to leave town. She wanted to go before her first season was really over ; and, above all

things, she would insist upon her uncle keeping her retreat a secret. Mr. Thornton induced her to stay in town until Lord Folden and his brother, Max Walton, began to make their arrangements for grouse shooting; but Lucy was firmness itself in her determination that her address should not be known for a long time, and that no visitors should be invited to Lydstep House. Her uncle had been a good deal troubled by Lucy's plans, which excluded a return to town for two or three years. He would not hear of this. Then she would go abroad, ever so far away, where it was impossible to get back for years. Had anything occurred in town to offend or annoy her? No. Was there anything he could do to make London more agreeable to her? No; she had no objection to London. When she felt competent by education and ordinary accomplishments to take her position in town, she would return. She was competent; she was the queen of the season; her accomplishments had a fresh-

ness that was charming ; she might marry into the noblest family in the land at once, if she would ; she was worthy of her name, worthy of all the Thornton gallery of ancestral portraits, worthy of the highest state. Mr. Thornton grew eloquent in her praises, and entreated the young beauty to reconsider her plans ; but Lucy kissed him, and was adamant.

Lydstep House was the family residence of some friends of Mr. Thornton who had gone abroad for three or four years. Lucy accepted the offer of it at once, without seeing it ; and the place turned out all that could be desired. Mr. Thornton had visited his wayward niece as frequently as his old habits would permit. He had been content to hunt and shoot his grouse in Wales instead of Scotland for her sake during two seasons. Only two days prior to Jacob's unexpected appearance on the scene, he had once more arrived on a long visit to his lovely niece, who was accompanied in her retreat by Mr. Thornton's

housekeeper, and two awfully clever and learned companion teachers of art, science, and languages—ladies who had sounded the depths of all educational systems, who had dived into the hidden mysteries of science, and who had soared on the wings of inspiration into the highest realms of art. Lucy professed to be a wonderfully earnest and industrious pupil of these vestals of learning, but she really devoted most of her time to music and drawing. Her sketch-books were full of pictures that she called “reminiscences.” They were rough studies of cottages, country stiles and walks, bits of brook scenery, glimpses of woodland nooks. One of the vestals had indeed expressed to the other some serious alarm at the monotonous and limited character of the young lady’s pleasures. But Lucy in her own quiet way had impressed upon their minds that she was the mistress of Lydstep House, and that she had a will of her own apart from Mr. Thornton’s; they therefore kept their views of Miss Thornton’s

habits to themselves, and had nothing but praises of her mind, her intellect, and her amiability for the ear of her uncle.

A few days after Jacob Martyn's sudden appearance at Lydstep House, Mr. Cavendish Thornton, as was his wont, having partaken of coffee and dry toast in his own apartment, went into Lucy's morning room to have a chat with his niece.

"I want to talk seriously to you, sir, this morning," said Lucy the moment her uncle entered the room.

"What is the matter, my child?" said Mr. Thornton, taking her hand. "Your lip is trembling, and you look angry."

"I think I am angry," said Lucy, "but I do not wish to be angry, only firm; uncle, you have done me a great wrong, and yourself too."

"Lucy, what is the meaning of this strange manner?"

"You have sacrificed me to family pride," said Lucy; "accepting a trust from one who laid down his life for the honour

of his family and the glory of his king, you have betrayed it; you have allowed me to go on doubting the truest heart that ever beat, and you have almost driven me into marrying out of spite a person whom I could never love."

Contemplating the abyss upon which her woman's judgment had tottered, Lucy was almost beside herself with anger against him who had stood between her and Jacob.

"Lucy, you are mad, or I am dreaming," exclaimed Mr. Thornton, his every action betokening the greatest amazement.

"*I* am not mad, uncle; *you* are not dreaming. It is now four years since you found me a happy girl, since which time you have made my life a burden to me."

"Lucy, Lucy!" exclaimed her uncle.

"What did I care for fortune, when you had thrust from me all I cared to live for?"

Lucy had satisfied herself, in a conversation with Allen, that Mr. Thornton had

intercepted her letters to Jacob and kept back Jacob's letters to herself.

"I do not understand you, niece; nor will my love for you permit me to listen to this language. Since first I had the happiness of restoring you to the world, and fulfilling a sacred trust confided to me by my nephew and by your father, you have been continually in my thoughts; it has been my chief delight to sacrifice myself for your happiness."

"Happiness!" exclaimed Lucy, with sorrowful dignity, and with a composure before which Mr. Thornton grew confused and troubled. "Happiness! Was it not enough that my poor mother should die of a broken heart, that my dear, dear father should have his last moments embittered by your miserable family pride? Was not this a sufficient sacrifice, but the Thornton blood, the Thornton escutcheon, the Thornton portrait gallery should demand another victim?"

"When you are mistress of yourself,



Miss Thornton," said the old man, "I will listen to you : meanwhile I will seek elsewhere for information concerning the change which has come over you. Ingratitude is not a Thornton vice. You are not well, Lucy ; you are not yourself."

Mr. Thornton began to have some faint idea of the situation ; but he was too much overcome to collect his thoughts and meet it.

"Do not leave me, uncle," said Lucy ; "I will try and be calm. Pray, sit down ; we must understand each other now."

"Then be good enough without this strange declamation—which is an accomplishment I did not know you possessed, my child—to explain yourself."

"I will," said Lucy, her eyes filling with tears. "When you found me, I was happy, if I was poor. What have riches to do with happiness ?"

A great deal, thought Mr. Thornton.

"I was poor, but contented and happy in the love of one who, if he had neither name

nor fortune to recommend his suit, would not have soiled his fingers with dishonour; no, not for a dukedom."

Mr. Thornton now saw the situation clearly, and at once chided himself mentally for thinking that he could hope to turn that youthful attachment which Allen had discovered in the first hours of their triumphant discovery of the Thornton heiress.

"You knew of my engagement; you broke it ruthlessly and by improper means; you did not even take the trouble to consider whether he was worthy of my love; you did not even seek to know the secret of my own heart; you intercepted his letters."

Mr. Thornton winced at this. It was a blow; it struck his pride roughly; it brought the colour into his face.

"Yes, leagued with your own servant, to make me doubt a true and noble heart; and I was weak enough to believe ill of him. The Thornton blood was not noble



enough to give me a true woman's faith and generosity. I have behaved like the wretched thing I had nearly become—a lady of fashion, a queen in society, a West-end belle. I despise myself for the very narrowness of my escape."

"Be calm, Lucy! be calm," said Mr. Thornton. He did not know what else to say. That reference to the letters was a blow which almost struck him helpless.

Between her tears Lucy's eyes flashed anger, sorrow, and indignation. She sobbed and paced the room like one distraught.

"And to think that I should have doubted him!" she went on. "To think that finery and jewels and those empty dolls in the Row should have overshadowed his image, should have dimmed the remembrance of that last day at Cartown! To think that Mr. Max Walton, a lord's son, who makes bets on his conquest of a woman, should have filled the very smallest

corner of my thoughts for a moment ! To think that I could not have guessed what had been done to deceive me !”

“ Be calm,” said Mr. Thornton again, “ you do not think what you say.”

“ Oh, Mr. Thornton ! Uncle, if you will,” said Lucy, softening. “ Was this worthy of you ? Was this worthy of your great and noble ancestors ?”

“ Damme if I think it was !” exclaimed the old man, starting up from his seat and striding across the room. “ I never was in such an infernal fix in my life. ’Pon my soul I don’t quite know where I am. If they had told me that my niece Lucy could have abused her proud old uncle in this strain I would have said they lied. Damme ! I would have fought my own brother to the death for half the accusations she has made against me. But a woman !—what the devil are you to do with a woman ?”

As Lucy softened in her manner, Mr. Thornton began to be tempestuous. He had no other resource. He did not know

what to do or say. Lucy having given full rein to her anger, now, like a woman, found relief in sympathetic tears.

"Uncle, I am only a woman," she said. "I have been sorely tried. I did not mean to say all I have said. I know it is all a mistake."

"Mistake, damme! A fine mistake," said Mr. Thornton, marching about the room.

"I know you did not mean to be unkind; you would have made me a queen if you could."

"Unkind, damme!—heaven forgive me for swearing in the presence of a lady—nothing was farther from my thoughts."

Lucy followed him as he paced the room.

"I have no doubt you thought it was for my own good."

"Good!—I would have died for you. Damme, I would have done factory work myself for you sooner than you should have been unhappy!"

Lucy took his hand. The two went marching away from one end of the room to the other.

"I could never marry Max Walton," said Lucy.

"Damn Max Walton!—shade of the Thorntons, forgive me—you shall not be coerced."

Lucy slipped her arm through her uncle's, and laid her head on his shoulder.

"Forgive me, uncle—dear uncle," she said in her winning voice.

Uncle Thornton stopped suddenly. "God bless you, my child," he exclaimed, and the next moment he was fairly sobbing over her.

"I could not bear to lose your good opinion, Lucy, to say nothing of your love ; it was as much that old fool Allen's fault as mine ; I am as big an ass as he is ; forgive me, darling ; promise never to say an unkind word again to me ; I'm only an old woman, a silly old woman ; I could not get

on at all without you, Lucy, my dear, dear child."

The old man stroked her head and fondled her hands.

"I am so very very sorry," sobbed Lucy. "I ought to have explained myself to you long ago, ought to have told you all; it is I who am to blame."

"No, no, my dear Lucy; say no more about it; put your arms round my neck; I had a little sister like you when I was a boy; she died when I was a boy, too; I am an old man now, Lucy, a very old man; there, my dear child, there, there!"

The subdued old gentleman rocked Lucy to and fro in his arms and crooned over her, and Lucy was stung with remorse and sorrow so deeply that at last she fainted and lay still as if she were dead.

The shock was very brief; Lucy opened her eyes at the first drop of water which the old man hurriedly flung in her face.

"Don't ring," she whispered. "I shall be better in a moment."

He bathed her temples, and kissed her, and chafed her hands, and the colour returned to her cheeks.

"Let me ring for a little sherry," he said calmly, and wiping all traces of emotion from his face.

"Yes, dear," said Lucy.

"Bring some sherry and a biscuit," said Mr. Thornton.

When the wine was brought and the servant had disappeared, the old man filled a glass for Lucy, which he insisted upon her drinking at once.

"Now Lucy, one more—you must drink this. I am going to propose a toast." Lucy smiled and took the glass.

"*His* health," said the Colonel, emptying his glass and turning it up German fashion.

Lucy sipped her wine and looked up at her uncle, her eyes full of gratitude and love.

"What has passed is to be a secret, Lucy."



"Yes, dear," said Lucy.

"And now, my child, where is *he*?"

"In Neathville," said Lucy, her eyes seeking the ground.

"Thought so," said her uncle. "Let him come to me, Lucy—let him come at once."

"Yes, dear uncle," said Lucy; "and you have forgiven my rash and cruel and unkind words?"

"We will forgive each other," he said. "Let us seal a bond of peace and love."

He took her face in both his hands, kissed her tenderly, patted her head, and saying, "Let him come to me at once," left the room.





CHAPTER X.

AFTER THE STORM.

TWO lovers wandering by the sea. That was the picture of the calm which followed. Two lovers walking hand in hand, with the sea playing a quiet, soothing accompaniment to their thoughts. The storm was over. The tempest had left behind the calm which always follows passion. I fear Messrs. Gingham, of Paternoster Row, London, would not have been quite satisfied with Jacob's last letter if they could have been witnesses of his occupation just then.

It was a sunny summer evening. The dreamy music of the ebbing water fell like



balm upon the spirit. It awakened sympathetic responses in two beating hearts. It was full of a sweet solace. Lucy's thoughts wandered dreamily to London, where the season was throbbing and pulsating and boiling up and steaming like a hot spring. She thought of herself cantering down the Row, then sauntering home to dress for dinner, with Max Walton lingering at her side, trying to win his bet; she saw herself being taken in to dinner by Lord Folden; she heard her praises being sung later on at night by Lady Miffits; and she shuddered at her narrow escape from a fashionable life in the Max Walton sense. A little more heartlessness, she thought, a little less love of Jacob and the old days, and she would have ridden straightway into the thick of it; a little looser rein, away she would have gone, establishing herself on that giddy height of vanity to which her uncle and Max Walton would have led her. She would have outshone other women

both in beauty and jewels, until a new belle came to take the town by storm, and eclipse her, and tear her heart with jealousy. And what would have become of Jacob Martyn ?

The quiet music of the ocean summoned Jacob's thoughts back to Middleton and the cottage at Cartown. There was one transient shadow upon his happiness just then. There was a pang of regret in the thought that his father was not living to see the sunshine of Lucy's face, and to know that his only son was going to be successful and happy at last.

"And you came here quite by chance ?" said Lucy, after they had walked a long distance in a subdued happy silence.

"Unless a kind fate, pitying my misery, brought me here," says Jacob, looking into her clear, loving eyes.

"Perhaps that is why it led me here first. I can never forgive myself for doubting you, Jacob ! But I do not think I did quite doubt you. It used to make

me very, very miserable to think that the day might come when I should——”

“We will not speak, dearest, of such a possibility. I once doubted you, Lucy, and then I almost doubted our good Father Himself; for it seemed as if I had lost everything in earth and heaven.”

“My dear Jacob!” said Lucy, leaning her head upon his shoulder.

“Ah! my dear, sweet girl, you will never know how much I love you; and how grateful I am to you for the happiness of knowing that you love me—you do, dear, don’t you?”

Jacob liked to hear her say so.

“Love you! my own dear Jacob! But do you remember when I was a little coquettish, when I appeared to be angry at your coming to the cottage on a cleaning day?”

“Can I ever forget any moment of my life spent with you!”

“How Lady Mary Miffits would stare to hear me talk of a cleaning day! Poor

dear ! she would not know what I meant."

"Who is Lady Miffits?"

"No one whom you know, dear ; she chaperoned me through my first season in town, when I was the belle. They said I was the belle."

Lucy blushed, and Jacob, looking round to see that they had the little bit of bay quite to themselves, put his arm round her waist and kissed her. He was compensated for all his misery. How completely a long-looked-for, long-desired happiness shuts out the pain we have suffered in reaching the prize ! The happy land that once was so far away, he had reached it. The far-off haven that seemed impossible to win across a sea of storm and quicksand, he had gained the longed-for anchorage.

What a story they had to tell each other ! There were some rounded clumps of rock in this little bay, and the lovers sat down to bill and coo and talk and repeat their vows, and look out upon the sea where a



long streak of red gold like a path led the way to a land of glorious crimson. They were surprised to see how soon it faded out, the cold blue of the east gaining intensity the while, and showing at length a marble moon wandering in a little company of twinkling stars.

It was late when they returned to the house on the cliffs, and Lucy was framing all kinds of excuses for her uncle. She had no idea the time had gone so quickly. They had so many things to talk about. Jacob had been parted from her so long that she kept him gossiping about a hundred things. She hoped her uncle had not been troubled about her long absence. She had brought Mr. Martyn to plead and explain for her. But the little speech was not needed. The steamer which had paddled out to sea while they sat in the little bay had Mr. Cavendish Thornton on board.

"He left this note for you, miss," said Allen, breathing hard and staring at Jacob

"It was sudden—master's going; but I were to say that he left his love for you and Mr. Martyn, and this note."

"Dear uncle!" exclaimed Lucy at this kind and touching message, implying that all her hopes and wishes were realised. Jacob's heart beat proudly and with a deep gratitude. The significance of the message lifted him into the skies. He had come prepared to be proud and firm and brave with Mr. Cavendish Thornton; come prepared to justify himself in what he conceived would be an angry altercation; and Mr. Thornton had not only left the field clear but with signals of amity. Jacob's good star was indeed in the ascendant.

"My darling niece," read Lucy, through a dim halo that gathered about her eyes, "we have forgiven each other; we will forget all that is disagreeable in the past; but you will never leave your poor old selfish uncle."

"My noble, good uncle, never," said



Lucy, the mist gathering before her eyes still more densely. "Read it for me, Jacob."

"Desire Mr. Martyn," continued Jacob, reading the letter in a voice of emotion, "to follow me to London in two or three days ; I have gone by my favourite route, *viâ* Bristol by steamer."

"We saw it leaving the bay, my dear uncle!" said Lucy between her tears.

"Do not be surprised at my sudden return ; tell Mr. Martyn it is on his account ; there are many arrangements to make. He will give me the address of his solicitor, and we shall soon put matters in proper form. There is another steamer to Bristol in three days from this, if he likes that route ; or he can take the coach to Newport and on to Gloucester, where he will get a train. Tell him I am very jealous of him. If I see that silly brother of Lord Folden's, I will put you right with him ; he never thought you were very much in earnest."

"Poor Max," said Lucy, smiling now and looking a trifle archly at Jacob.

"Who is Max, dear?" said Jacob.

"Max Walton, the Honourable Max Walton, sir," said Lucy, wiping away the last traces of her tears, "one of my admirers."

Jacob smiled, but for a moment he was jealous ; only for a moment, and then she finished the letter. "Ever, my dear niece, yours most affectionately, Cavendish Thornton."

"God bless him," said Lucy, at which moment Allen returned to say dinner was on the table.

"Dinner !" said Lucy, in astonishment

"Unless you have dined," said Allen.

"Oh, no," said Lucy, "but——"

Allen left the room.

"Have you dined?" said Lucy.

"Yes, on kisses, but without the bread and cheese of the proverb," said Jacob, taking the dear sweet face in both his big hands, and kissing the pouting lips.

"There! now that will do, Jacob dear; I am going to ring the bell."

Allen returned.

"Have the ladies dined?" asked Lucy.

"Yes, miss; they dined with Mr. Thornton, who ordered the table to be laid afresh for two, and kept till you returned, miss."

"Mr. Martyn, take me in to dinner," said Lucy, putting her fair hand on Jacob's arm, to the disgust and astonishment of Allen, who made up his mind, there and then, to follow Mr. Thornton to London with all despatch.

There never was such a delicious little dinner; never were two diners so happy; Jacob could hardly believe that he was not dreaming. When dessert was served, and they were alone, Lucy said, "We must talk about old times to convince me that the present is reality."

"Do you remember that last day at Cartown, when you made tea?" said Jacob.

"Ah! yes, I do," Lucy replied, looking back at the picture which at once came up

in her memory with a thousand happy thoughts.

“And the clock that would hurry on and that dear smell of tar and the wood fire !”

“I have thought of it all thousands of times, dear ; and when you were obliged to go at last, and I watched the lamp of the mail cart until it shone like a star and then went out, dear, and left me almost broken hearted.”

Jacob drew his chair close to Lucy's, and his arm somehow strayed to her waist and held her.

“Lucy, dear, we will go there as soon as we can—eh, love ? and see the dear old place, the cottage, the wood, that little brook, and the apple tree under which you stood in those early days when I was dying of love and dared not tell you.”

“Yes, dear ; and do you remember the gipsy tent, and—”

Jacob started.

“What is the matter, dear?”

“Nothing,” said Jacob, “nothing; I spent a night or two in the encampment, when I went to the cottage and found you gone.”

“Indeed,” said Lucy; “tell me of it, love; when was it?”

“In the winter; it is not a pleasant memory; you shall hear the story some other time; at present let us only bask in the sunshine, dear; we have had enough of the frost and snow. There, now, you must drink one more glass of this grand old wine; and we will clink our glasses, as Bohemians do, and toast Fortune.”

“What would Allen say if he saw us?” said Lucy, laughing. “I fear we were never intended for Mayfair, Jacob.”

“There! I clink the glass at the top, then at the bottom, then I say, ‘To Lucy.’”

“You said we should toast Fortune,” replied Lucy, smiling.

“It is all the same, dear,” said Jacob.

"Now I must leave you to your wine," said Lucy, rising, "and prepare my companions for your presence in the drawing-room. I have two wise ladies here who assist me in my studies, you know. There, dear, will you have coffee here or in the drawing-room?"

Lucy looked round at her lover with arch sparkling eyes. Jacob's only reply was to kiss the mouth that asked the tantalising question.

Coffee was speedily announced, and Jacob followed Allen to the drawing-room, where he was duly introduced to Lucy's ladies, whom he found very pleasant and agreeable. They played, and sang, and talked of lords and ladies. By-and-by Lucy sat down to her harp and sang the dear old hymn of the early days; and, with the reader's permission, we will leave Jacob drinking in words and music and all their dear associations, and, when no one observed him, quietly wiping away some tears of joy.



CHAPTER XI.

AN ACTOR'S HOLIDAY.

JACOB'S departure for London was accelerated, and his route thither somewhat changed, by a letter which he received at Neathville from Paul Ferris, better known to my readers as Spenzonian Whiffler. This letter had been redirected from Dinsley by Mr. Windgate Williams, who, for Jacob's edification, had traced upon the back of it some wonderful flashes of wit and calligraphy.

Spens' letter was brief. It informed Jacob that the theatre being closed for a short season, he had taken a holiday, and

was to be heard of, for three days only, at the Blue Posts Hotel, Cartown, where we find Jacob on the evening of the second day following his blissful time with Lucy Thornton.

"You must be awfully tired," said Spen, emerging from the dingy coffee-room of the "Posts," and shaking his old friend warmly by both hands.

"I am, old boy. I have had a long journey, but the sight of your good, kind face is as good as a glass of champagne."

"Waiter, send in the supper I ordered as soon as you can," said Spen.

"All right, sir ; the cook's attending to it."

"And now, Jacob," said Spen, "sit down and tell me all about yourself. By Jove, I have experienced the strangest heap of sensations yesterday and to-day that ever afflicted mortal man. I have been in one perpetual whirl of excitement, anxiety, fear, happiness, depression, misery, and bliss."

"You have indeed been enjoying yourself," said Jacob, smiling. "How long has it taken to go through so much?"

"Two days, my dear boy; only two days. I seem to have lived half a century in that time. Apart from the immediate sensations of the present, my mind has been wandering in the past. I have been tumbling and somersault throwing, in imagination, down Spawling's garden; mixing Indian ink at the pump, thrashing that big fellow from the country with the greasy dinner-bag; dodging Dorothy upstairs and downstairs, and in my lady's chamber; doing mock heroics among autumn leaves between here and a famous cottage at Cartown; wondering all sorts of things about you and Lucy; and, above all, falling desperately in love myself, and I am ready and willing at this moment to go through the last act with real properties. But, just like me, I ask you to tell me all about yourself, and I proceed at once to give you my own history. When you

know all, you will forgive my wretched egotism, and maybe laugh at my miscellaneous sensations. But we are all strange creatures of impulse, and there does seem such a magic in this old town of our boyhood, that I must be forgiven if I am not quite myself here."

Spен thrust his hands deep down into his pockets, then removed them, stood up, sat down, looked at the ceiling, warmed his back at an imaginary fire (which summer had covered up with paper shavings), patted Jacob on the back, and called him a "dear old boy," and exhibited many other signs of the strange excitement of which he had spoken.

Supper was brought in while the two young fellows conversed, but it did little to interrupt their animated intercourse. Whenever an opportunity occurred, Jacob told Spен of his troubles and triumphs, and Spен threw in at every opportunity snatches of his own experiences, which in their way were strange and interesting,

but neither so varied nor so romantic as Jacob's.

Spen had been hard at theatrical work for years. His stories were of patient study at home, drudgery at rehearsals, and hard work before the footlights, leading gradually up to that brilliant success of which we have previously heard. He told Jacob that there was much less of sentiment and romance in a theatrical career than the public understood.

Success demanded very much more drudgery and labour than was generally imagined. Details of dress, of manner, of character, elocution, tradition, attitude, and a variety of apparently small things made up the grand whole of a leading actor. But Spen was not willing, evidently, to say much about his theatrical career. His talk was chiefly of the past, of their first meeting, and of those early days at the Cartown school.

But the more exciting portions of his talk were associated with a young lady

whom he called a divine creature, a glorious girl, a superb woman, and other endearing and descriptive names—a young lady whom he had seen come out of the old school-house on the previous day with two little girls and a boy ; the most gentle, gracious, fascinating little witch he had ever seen in all his career professional and non-professional. He had followed her over a well-known path, and in fun had helped the children to gather wild flowers.

“Only in fun, my dear boy, so far as they were concerned, but in desperate earnestness on my own part. What fools we are ! Here was I, years ago, in a rural paradise, with real flowers and brooks and woods, real valleys, real autumn tints and summer breezes, sighing for gaslight and paint, canvas meadows, mock thunder, and a hollow fame. It seemed to me yesterday as if I would give the world to live out the remainder of my life among the old real scenes, but the desire, I must confess,

was immensely promoted by the hope of a fairy partnership with Titania, my fairy queen of yesterday. You will say I have grown into a romantic fellow in my years of discretion. I suppose I've been so long mewed up among London bricks and mortar that the country takes my reason prisoner.

Jacob was more astonished now at the change which had taken place in Spen than he had been while conversing with his old friend in London. Although the merriman of the Cartown school had lost none of his animal spirits, yet the real fun and frolic of the old days were wanting. Nobody would have taken him for the funny man of a theatrical company. His face, it is true, had that peculiar, sallow, closely-shaven look which characterises the profession generally ; but there were strong lines in it which one would associate with tragedy more than with comedy, except when the face was lighted up by some quaint conceit, and then there

was something essentially humorous in its peculiar dry expression.

"Now, Spen, let us talk seriously. Drop this fictitious kind of personal confession. Let us get out of romance. Have you really ever thought of marrying?"

"Yes, indeed, I have," said Spen, with a grave twinkle of the eye. "I thought of it for the first time yesterday, and I thought about nothing else until after your arrival this evening."

"Ah! You will have your joke," said Jacob, laughing. "Earnest conjugal ambition is not so sudden as that."

"Honour bright," said Spen, "I am in real earnest, and you shall see the lady of my choice in the morning. I could not endure the general notions of courtship and matrimony. If I take a fancy to anything, I must have it at once. There is no hesitation about my character. You shall see; and I never yet made a mistake in reading the face of man or woman."

The night soon came to these long,

severed friends, and early in the morning they were out among the old haunts, fraught to them with so many happy and peculiar associations. Passing through the churchyard, Jacob noticed a simple granite column marking the spot where Spen had told him in the old days that the dead clown's ghost had rebuked him for his ingratitude. At the base the grass had grown up, making a pretty natural fringe of green beneath the simple word, "PETROSKI."

A bee dangling in the bell of a kingcup close by made a drowsy hum, which added to the sweet yet solemn repose of the familiar scene.

"Ah! you have a noble heart," said Jacob, turning upon Spen affectionately. "How long has this monument been here?"

"Well," said Spen, "two or three years, I suppose. Poor dear old Pet. I should like to have had Hamlet's words about Yorick underneath the dear boy's name, but the

churchwardens objected. They did not like quotations from Shakespeare on grave-stones, and it was contrary to their rule. Perhaps it is better as it is. Poor Petroski !”

Jacob's heart smote him bitterly when he remembered that there was one far dearer to him than Petroski was to Spen, who might, for aught he knew, at that moment be lying beneath the sod unrecorded on the stone above.

When first he left Middleton, cursing the place and his own wretched destiny, he thought he would come back at intervals privately and quietly lay a flower upon that grave which had closed over all the blood relationship which seemed to exist for him in this world ; but time wore on and he was content to sit down now and then with his memories, and to pay his tribute of flowers in imagination. But his heart rebuked him at sight of the tall column pointing upwards from the grave of Petroski.

“You are sad, my boy,” said Spen. “You remind me of that time in the autumn when I said you would make a hit on the stage. Come, we must have no clouds in the sunshine of this day. See, yonder is the old school ; the bell is already ringing, the boys are slinking into the dear old doorway with their long-eared books and their greasy dinner-bags. Ah ! they are a different lot to those whom we knew. The boots at the Posts tells me that the boys get different treatment to that which we received at the hands of Spawling. Those lads yonder seem to have had all the sprightliness of life whipped out of them.”

They stood for some time gazing at the well-known school-house. Presently they went behind the building to reconnoitre. They hid themselves in the garden to watch the schoolmaster go forth to his duties. They had hardly sheltered themselves when a scantily clothed child knocked at the door, which was opened by an elderly

woman with stiff grey curls hanging down each cheek and clustering about a pair of spectacles that were supported by a thin, bony nose, slightly red at the extremity.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Jacob, clutching Spen's arm.

"What's the matter?" said Spen in a whisper.

"Matter?" exclaimed Jacob, "by all that's miserable, it's my aunt Keziah."

"The devil!" said Spen.

"No, not exactly that, but certainly Mrs. Gompson."

"*Mon Dieu!* The old griffin you used to tell me about. Keep quiet."

"Buy a few pegs or laces!" said Mrs. Gompson, surveying the half-naked urchin from uncovered head to naked feet, "certainly not. Nothing of the kind."

"They're very cheap, mum."

"Cheap! Where do you live, child?"

"Down the lane, please, mum."

"Down the lane, eh! Gipsy child—I

thought so. Gipsy child, listen to me. Are you not ashamed to go about imposing on people in this way, endeavouring to injure the honest tradesman who pays rent and taxes by underselling him in the matter of pegs and laces and other merchandise?"

"Please, mum, I didn't mean to do it," said the little child, looking up out of a pair of black, sympathetic eyes.

"Oh! You didn't mean to do it! We shall see. Why does not your mother dress you before she sends you out? I declare its perfectly shocking!" said Mrs. Gompson, surveying the well-shapen, naked legs which stood firmly and with a natural grace upon the doorstep.

"Please, mum, I haven't no mother."

"Oh! you haven't no mother! Why, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. How dare you go about the streets and lanes without any mother. And pray, have you no father?"

"No, mum."

"Ah! well, you're none the worse off for that; and you can't help having no mother. I dare say you'll try to make out that you have been a stolen child to excite sympathy, and impose upon the benevolent and tender-hearted, eh?—the charitable and philanthropic people who endow beggary and roguery. Do you know what philanthropy is?"

"No, mum; please, mum."

"Ah! I dare say you don't even know your alphabet. I dare say you think it's something to eat."

"I don't know, mum, please; but will you buy—some—pegs?"—

"No, child, certainly not. Miss Winthorpe—Edith, I say!" shouted Mrs. Gompson, turning her head into the house; whereupon Jacob gave further signs of excitement and agitation, such as had almost attracted the griffin eyes of aunt Keziah to the gooseberry bushes.

"What's the matter now?" asked Spen, in a whisper.

"Never mind," said Jacob, in reply. "Fate is only having a lark with us, as Windgate Williams would say. Let the magician go on; let the play be played out."

"All right," whispered Spen. "Miss Winthorpe's got her cue; don't interrupt her."

A young lady in a light morning dress came to the door.

"Edith, by all that's good and beautiful!" said Jacob.

"My angel! my angel!" said Spen. "My Titania! The lady I told thee of."

"Do keep quiet, Spen," said Jacob; "we shall be discovered."

"You make more noise than I do," said Spen, "keep quiet yourself, you are almost shaking the leaves off that tree."

"Mary, Mary!" exclaimed Mrs. Gompson, looking straight in the direction of Jacob. "Those cats are amongst the gooseberry bushes again. Do go and drive them away, every berry will be shaken off; we

shall not have enough gooseberries for a tart, much more to preserve."

"Now you have done it," whispered Spen, "here's a go! I will frighten her into fits if she comes."

Spen pushed back his hat, lifted up his collar, dropped his jaw, and struck a most strange and idiotic attitude, which convulsed Jacob with silent laughter. The change was as rapid as it was grotesque. The face was quite a psychological triumph. Jacob was at once carried back to his early meeting with Spen. He laughed several big berries to the ground in spite of all his efforts to control himself. Fortunately, however, Mary was making bread, and it was not convenient for her to leave the dough in which she was plunged up to her elbows. The comedy was therefore not so abruptly closed as the two friends in the garden had feared it might be.

"Miss Winthorpe," said Mrs. Gompson, "bring Miss Grace Wilmott and Masters Barnby and Trundleton here."



At Edith's bidding three children under ten came to the door.

"Now, Miss Wilmott and Masters Barnby and Trundleton," said Mrs. Gompson, surveying them with pride and authority, "I wish you to teach each other a little lesson. Little gipsy girl——"

"Yes, mum."

"Do you see those nice, happy, well-dressed young lady and young gentlemen?"

"Yes, mum."

"This happiness and luxury is the fruit not only of good breeding, but of good citizenship and education. Bear that in mind, will you?"

"Yes, mum," said the little hawker, beginning to cry.

"I thought that would affect your hardened little heart. Now Miss Grace Wilmott and Masters Barnby and Trundleton, you see this ragged dirty little child?"

"Yes, ma'am," said the three in a falsetto chorus.

"That matted hair is the result of bad citizenship, loose habits, non-attendance at church, the want of knowing a-b, ab, and c-o-w, cow, and other rudiments of learning, which lead up to an acquaintance with the abstruse sciences. Will you remember that?"

"Yes, Mrs. Gompson," said the chorus again.

"Very well, that is what I call a practical lesson of life, a true system of teaching social economy and the rights and advantages of good citizenship. Gipsy girl, here is a penny for you. You may go, and never come here again."

"Yes, mum," and the child, with her eyes bent on the ground, went meekly one way, while Mrs. Gompson marched pompously in another direction leading to the school, satisfied that she had done her duty and at the same time been guilty of a little womanly weakness in supporting vagrancy with her purse.

The griffin had hardly turned away

before Edith hurriedly shut the door and Spen darted off after the little black-eyed hawker. Jacob thought it best to remain where he was, and hold a council of war with himself.

In a few moments Spen, however, beckoned him with both hands. Jacob hastened to his friend.

"Such an adventure!" exclaimed Spen, his sallow face glowing with animation.

"Well, well, what is it?"

"I had just caught the poor little beggar at the same time that Titania swooped down upon her."

"Who? who?"

"Titania — Flora — Dorcas — Hebe — Miranda—heaven knows what her proper name is—you call her Edith. She had hurried out of the front door to give the child money, and, by the Lord! I've kissed her. Now, it is no good frowning on a fellow; I couldn't help it. She is my fate, and, by Jupiter! she shall go back to London with me!"

When Spen's boisterous declarations were somewhat subdued, Jacob explained to him all that he knew of Edith, and ventured to predict that she had been induced to leave home and take a situation as teacher owing to the unkind treatment and jealousy of her sisters.

"And what do you propose to do?" said Spen, his eyes full of astonishment and wonder.

"To take you into the dear old house, my boy, and, if you are willing, formally introduce you to your fate."


"Willing!" exclaimed Spen with theatrical action and fervour. "Away, away! my soul's in arms, and eager for the fray."





CHAPTER XII.

HOW JACOB PERFORMED A DELICATE NEGOTIATION ON BEHALF OF MR. PAUL FERRIS, TOGETHER WITH OTHER INTERESTING INFORMATION.

“N second thoughts, Spen, you had better let me see the lady alone,” said Jacob, when the two were on the threshold of the well-known front door.

“My own thought, with a but,” said Spen.

“Well, what is the but? Go on, *mon ami*.”

“Perhaps it is only ‘much ado about

nothing;' but you remember Claudio's lines :—

“ ‘ Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love ;
Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues ;
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent : for beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.’ ”

“ Is it come to this, i' faith ?” said Jacob, smiling.

“ It was the flat transgression of the schoolboy, that being over-joyed with finding a bird's nest, he showed it to his companion, who stole it.”

“ Fie ! fie ! Benedict's philosophy does not apply here. Edith is not in mine eye ‘ the sweetest lady that e'er I looked upon ;’ she has only a second place.”

“ There thou strikest home. But art quite sure that all is settled between thee and thy woodland Venus ?”

“ What ! Lucy ?” said Jacob, laughing at the grotesque leer with which Spen asked the question.

“The same.”

“Have no fear—Edith shall be yours, Spen, if you are in earnest.”

“Raise the fatal knocker then at once. When your embassy is over, you’ll find me at the Blue Posts, a fortifying of myself for Coopid’s answer;” and away went the Spen Whiffler of old, cutting capers across the road to the intense delight of two small boys, a slipshod girl, and a draper’s assistant. The hosier’s apprentice had been to the big house, hard by, with a bundle of ribbons. His mission ended, he stood in the road to stare at Spen. Vainly endeavouring to support himself, during an immoderate fit of laughter, upon a treacherous yard measure, the frail rod broke and sent the grinning youth sprawling upon his paper box, before Spen had barely pulled a single face at him.

Jacob was admitted to the old school-room by a girl with patches of dough clinging to a pair of ruddy arms, which she partly shielded with a white apron.

She didna know whether Miss Winthorpe would see him or not. What name wor it? Martyn of Dinsley? Well, she'd go and tell her. He moit sit down a bit.

Jacob sat down, and, happily, before he had time to become very melancholy over his reminiscences of the time when he sat in that same room with his father, Miss Edith Winthorpe entered. She came forward and politely bowing to Jacob, said quite naturally that she was very glad to see him.

"Perhaps I should apologise for calling without an introduction," said Jacob, a little at a loss to explain his business.

"I hope it is not necessary for people belonging to the same town to apologise for knowing each other in a strange place."

"Thank you, Miss Winthorpe, I like your frankness; but this is more than a mere visit of courtesy; I have called upon rather a delicate business," said Jacob.

"Indeed," said Edith, losing her self-possession for a moment.

"Oh! oh!" said the doughy domestic, who had been listening at the key-hole.

Edith has since confessed that she expected a declaration of love from Jacob, and that she was quite prepared to receive it kindly.

"Then in the first place, Miss Winthorpe, I beg to tender to you the most abject apologies of a friend of mine whose love rather outran his discretion this morning."

"Indeed!" said Edith again, and this time, in a little confusion, rendered more apparent by a sudden doubt as to the motives of Jacob's visit.

"He is a gentleman, a man of taste and feeling, of noble and generous impulses. I have known him for years; and he has seen you."

Edith blushed and began to twist her handkerchief round one of her fingers.

"To be plain with you, Miss Winthorpe,

he wishes to be introduced to you, and if you can like him, he is ready to marry you whenever you will name the day. There!"

"There! Yes, I think you may say, 'there.' A nice piece of business to come upon and to propound before one has spoken half-a-dozen words to you, Mr. Martyn," said Edith, rising and opening the door, to the consternation of the domestic, who was so deeply interested in the conversation that she stood gaping at Edith, with only a vague idea that she had been caught in the act.

"I thought I heard you, Mary," said Edith, calmly; "perhaps you will step inside and take a seat?"

Mary sneaked away, and plunged her arms once more into the dough, which she beat and buffeted and rolled about in the most savage manner; sad illustrations of her wrath being exhibited the next morning in the flat hard cakes that were placed on Mrs. Gompson's breakfast-table.

Edith was not much disconcerted at this amusing incident; indeed she laughed heartily when she had closed the door upon Mary, and turning to Jacob said: "Well, what is this gentleman like? Is he handsome? Has he money? You see I am quite a woman of the world. I have left home to seek my fortune; and I must be my own mamma and solicitor in this matter."

And then she laughed again, at which Jacob was not pleased.

"But I think, perhaps, it would be best for me to send for Mrs. Gompson and take her advice," she said, in a graver mood.

"No! no! for goodness' sake don't do that," said Jacob.

"But is this proper, Mr. Martyn, to call upon a young lady when——"

"Mrs. Gompson is my aunt," said Jacob.

"Oh! now you are joking?"

"On my honour," said Jacob, "I will answer to her for your conduct."

Then Jacob begged Edith to listen calmly to all he would tell her ; whereupon, in a business-like manner, he described his own position and prospects, spoke of his great esteem for her, and his knowledge of her history ; and then entered fully into his early friendship with Mr. Paul Ferris, and related succinctly all he knew about his friend.

When Jacob talked of Spen's profession, Edith's attention became particularly earnest ; her bright eyes sparkled with enthusiasm as he told the story of Spen's gradual success. She clasped her hands with delight when Jacob described his recognition of this old friend on that brilliant night in the London theatre. Seeing how deeply the story interested her, Jacob dwelt longer upon this theme than he would otherwise have done.

"But—but I felt very much insulted, sir, this morning," said Edith, checking her evident interest in Mr. Ferris's history.

“He bitterly repents him of his conduct ; only pleading in extenuation your beauty and his love for you.”

Finally, Edith granted Jacob permission to introduce Mr. Ferris to herself and Mrs. Gompson : not that there was any necessity that the advice of the latter should be obtained ; for Mrs. Gompson, besides having no control over Edith (who had only been in Cartown a few days), had neither the love nor esteem of her teacher ; and Mrs. Winthorpe was a poor weak woman in the hands of two hard-hearted stiff-necked daughters, who would gladly have encompassed their pretty sister's ruin, and who had forced her from home, their cruelty almost surpassing that of Cinderella's wicked persecutors.

So, like many another girl, Edith was thrown upon her own resources. She had obtained her present situation through an advertisement, and it was quite open for her now, to use her own judgment and feelings entirely in the matter of the suit of

Mr. Ferris, whose delicate attention in gathering flowers for the children had not escaped her notice. His profession, which would have been a barrier in the eyes of some ladies, was to Edith one of his strongest recommendations.

A girl of spirit, a good musician, possessing a fine voice and an artistic taste, delighting in operatic music, and with a memory filled with her father's stories of theatrical life when he was leader of a London orchestra, Edith would gladly have chosen the stage for her own profession had she known how to begin; but to mention a theatre at home was to incur the penalty of a lecture from two bad sisters and a weak silly mother, and all sorts of penances besides.

Moreover, there was something in Mr. Ferris's manner and appearance which Edith liked; and Jacob's plea in his favour was so eloquent, Jacob's announcement of his own forthcoming marriage so decisive,

and the certainty of being relieved from a life of drudgery so attractive, that Edith, weighing all things carefully, and putting into the scale a little liking for the man, and much hope that true love would follow, made up her mind to receive Mr. Paul Ferris very graciously.

Inquiries at the inn and elsewhere led to the information that Mr. Spawling had been succeeded, as schoolmaster, by Mr. Gompson, from London ; who, after a little time, had been joined by his wife, when the Martyn establishment at Middleton was broken up.

The town had been a good deal scandalised at the domestic brawls of this uncongenial couple, and had not Mr. Gompson given up the ghost, the school committee would have discharged him. On his decease, Mrs. Gompson (who had shown great masculine power in dealing with the boys during her husband's illness, and whose mode of instruction seemed to be more successful than his), was appointed

head of the school, and she had retained her position ever since.

"She's gotten a rum way with th' lads, sir," said the rural waiter, "when she's goin to lick one on 'em she pitches th' cane from one end of the room to the other, and makes him fetch it: when he's fetched it she leathers into him like all that."

"And how do the school committee get along with her?"

"Oh, she's master of them too; they're all afraid on her; but she's not a bad schoolmissis, so fur as learning goes, I've heard say. She's up to all the new dodges of spelling, and writing, and 'rithmetics."

"Victory!" exclaimed Jacob, dashing into the dingy coffee-room; "I have wooed her for you far more earnestly than Viola, in trousers, wooed the Countess."

"But have yon succeeded? Is it really victory? If your Viola quotation be the fashion of it, then farewell the tranquil

mind," said Spen, half theatrically, half seriously.

"Go to—I have unclasped to thee the Book of Fate—thou may'st love her if thou wilt; an' thou wilt not, thou'lt lose a wench of rare mettle—

"“ Let still the woman take
An elder than herself; so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart.”"

"Methinks we are a fair and proper match, Jacob, I being several years her senior. We'll speak with the maid ourself, good Jacob;" and Spen strode right royally to the fireplace, and rang the bell.

"Waiter, a bottle of the best—the wine I spoke of," said Spen, to the clown who answered his ringing; "and now, Jacob, without further fooling, let us discuss the matter. What did she say? How did she look?"

Jacob related as nearly as possible all

that had taken place ; and the two agreed to wait upon the griffin and the fairy after dinner.

Meanwhile Jacob sat down to write letters, and Spen lit a cigar, in the smoke of which he tried to read his destiny. In his own eccentric way he loved Edith ; she was the first sunny thing he saw on revisiting the haunts of his youth, and it seemed to him that the charms of the old place were all personified in her. It may appear strange to some of my readers that this comic gentleman who painted his face and made people laugh, and whose pathos in real life was often almost like burlesque, should be so love-stricken at the first sight of a mere country girl. But Edith Winthorpe was no ordinary person ; we have seen how much she interested Jacob, and we must not forget that actors are only mortal after all, with hearts and minds as susceptible as those of other people, and with often a genuine romance in their very natures, which may lift some of

them to a loftier and more devoted height of love and friendship than many of those who follow professions outside the pale of art could possibly attain.





CHAPTER XIII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

SOME months after the events recorded in the last few chapters, Jacob Martyn was taking authorship very comfortably. The library of Mr. Bonsall, which had appeared to him so magnificently cozy, was not more of a book-paradise than the one in which he was engaged upon his "Romantic History of the Welsh," at Neathville, nor so much indeed; for in Jacob's study there was a presiding angel who sat near him and called him husband. What were Jacob's troubles and trials now that his barque, as Mr. Windgate Williams would

put it, had sailed gloriously into the harbour of Fame, Fortune, and Matrimony! I really do not know whether Jacob deserved so much honour and happiness. The critics, it was true, said that his "On the Track of a Sunbeam" was one of the most charming works of imaginative genius since "The Tempest" and "Undine." His wife thought there was nothing equal to it in literature. The *Dinsley Courant* went into absurdly extravagant ecstasies about it, the reviewer closing three columns of pompous eulogy, by stating that "the editor of this journal could not conclude these few remarks, which fall so far short of the subject, without expressing in some manner the inconceivable delight which he feels in being able to inform his readers that Jacob Martyn, who has stamped such an indelible mark on the roll of Fame, made his first serious effort at composition in the columns of the *Courant*, which might in reality be regarded as the cradle in which the mighty genius had been rocked; and,


to follow up the simile, we (the editor) may humbly take credit for being the literary nurse who rocked it."

Jacob's visit to London, though it had led to the speedy marriage of the lovers, had not been quite satisfactory to Lucy's uncle, who not only desired that Jacob should change his name, but also that he should undertake to contest any vacant seat in Parliament which he (Mr. Thornton) might select. The old man was very grand about his ancestors, and the necessity for Jacob being something more than an author. Moreover, with all due deference to Jacob's abilities, he thought that if a man was an author at all he should aim higher than being a mere writer of fairy tales, which were only fit for women and children. He had not much respect for scribblers, he said, at any time, and he could only tolerate historians, and wits of fashion.

Jacob would not consent to either of the suggested arrangements, whereupon Mr. Thornton bade a long farewell to the per-

petuation of Thorntonian greatness, and determined upon relinquishing all the schemes of ambition which the discovery of Lucy had for a time aroused in his mind ; and finish his existence in that quiet jog-trot fashion, which had been interrupted by the arrival of that never-to-be-forgotten letter from his brother's son, the soldier.

This change in Mr. Thornton's plans, and a violent row between master and man (arising out of Mr. Allen's alleged officiousness in the matter of certain love-letters, which had done so much mischief), blighted the hopes of the confidential servant. Mr. Allen's long-cherished idea of marrying Lady Frumpington's house-keeper, when his master should have a companion in an aristocratic son-in-law, was knocked on the head, as he told that charming damsel. With a limp, though agitated shirt frill, he bemoaned his unhappy lot ; and the loving creature whom he had so long adored eloped the next day with the French cook of a bishop ; which circumstance so



affected Mr. Allen, that he went into a violent fit of coughing and perspiration, and was, he believed, ever afterwards, a miserable valet.

On the completion of the Welsh book, and the receipt of a cheque for nearly double the amount expected for the work, Lucy and Jacob paid a visit to Mr. Paul Ferris. Edith and Spen were a very happy couple, and had received such warm invitations to visit the Grove, that they had arranged for a triumphant tour, "some Passion-week," to Dinsley; where Edith fully intended to show Paul off before her envious friends, and duly patronise her fawning sisters, who wrote to her in terms of the most glowing affection, after reading in the *Dinsley Courant* that "the eminent and distinguished comedian, Paul Ferris, Esq., had just led to the hymeneal altar, Miss Edith Winthorpe, the lovely and accomplished daughter of Mrs. Winthorpe of the Grove, in this town." They had treated her cards with contempt, but

unable to resist this paragraph, and the visions of a house in London, and long sisterly visits thither, they had poured out the latent tenderness of their virgin hearts upon Mrs. Ferris, in gushing floods of ink, on shining leaves of scented note-paper, sealed with the motto, "Though absent ever dear."

Mrs. and Mr. Ferris did visit Dinsley ; but they stayed at the Norfolk Hotel, which was a terrible blow to the wicked sisters. Mrs. Ferris was a kind-hearted woman ; but she could not resist this bit of revenge. Her sisters had been more than unsisterly to her, they had been unwomanly ; hating her for her beauty, they had not scrupled to express a hope that it would be a curse to her. Her mother had not dared to fight for her, the elder sisters were so fierce in their hatred and malice. She was a weak, unsophisticated woman, Mrs. Winthorpe. In her husband's lifetime she had implicitly relied upon his judgment and advice. When he died, she fell helplessly into the arms of these two daughters, who

ruled her ever afterwards. They did not, however, during Mrs. Ferris's visit to Dinsley, prevent her from dining every day at the "Norfolk," nor from driving out with the actor and his wife afterwards. At the close of their stay, Paul persuaded his wife to spend a day in the Grove at her old home, and the wicked sisters even graciously consented to receive her. They were willing, they said in a united letter addressed to the Hotel, quite willing, and indeed desirous of wiping out the past, forgetting and forgiving, and hoping for a happy future of mutual confidence and sisterly love. Mrs. Ferris could afford to be generous, and she consented to the reconciliation, which Paul advised. Once a year, therefore, the two families had a personal interchange of social intercourse, and the wicked sisters not only forgave Edith, but when they visited her in London, became quite enthusiastic play-goers, while Mrs. Winthorpe grew fat and round and rosy, in spite of white hairs and old age.



CHAPTER XIV.

TWO NOVELS IN BRIEF.

SOME wise philosopher has pointed out that if nature is full of contrivances for the promotion of happiness, life is crowded with opposing forces. The only consolation is to look forward to a more perfect state of existence. Two really good and noble people in this story, worthy of the happiness which seemed to have been arranged for them, were utterly disappointed. Their lives were blighted equally, though one was an intellectual man, and the other an ignorant woman. Do you remember that sweet face in the

old room at the Cartown school ? The deep blue eyes and the raven hair of her who was painted as Rosalind ? Jacob has not forgotten it ; neither has Spen. In his early life Mr. Dudley was intended for the bar ; but he had seen this young sparkling beauty and loved her. She became everything to him, his world, his existence. He gave up his profession, and devoted himself to the stage. He studied under a great master, and soon gave evidence of dramatic genius. He appeared at Old Drury, playing Romeo to his idol's Juliet. He felt in truth all the poetry set down in the text ; and afterwards, at her own home, he told the lady of his love. As time went on they became the rage. Dudley's Romeo, and Amy Clifton's Juliet ; his Orlando and her Rosalind ; his Prospero and her Miranda ; were marvels of fine acting. Then it became known that they were to be married, and little allusions to matrimony which cropped up in the text were caught at and applauded to the echo.

The theatrical world fairly loved them both ; and the beautiful Amy Clifton became more and more lovely. But she was not worthy of the large-hearted actor. Hers was but a painted passion. One unhappy night, when the notorious Lord Menzwith was in the fulness of his glory, she fell away from her allegiance and deserted her lover. The dazzling professions of the brilliant nobleman overcame her and she fled with him.

With her mysterious disappearance from the stage the public heard of the dangerous illness of Mr. Dudley Stewart. He was in a fever for weeks ; when he recovered he was a broken-down man.

There is no human being that is all bad. There are corners in the blackest hearts where some little virtue still remains to prove the divinity of their Maker. Amy Clifton's noble lover soon showed himself in his true colours ; she heard of the break-up of poor Dudley Stewart ; and one dreary night in winter, an outcast and a wanderer, she

found out his quiet retreat, and, imploring forgiveness, died in his arms, of want, neglect, and remorse.

His love for this woman was poor old Stewart's big sorrow ; and once a year, as I have said, he gave himself up to it wholly ; but his memory was always with the bright, sunny, dazzling girl who had played Juliet to his Romeo in the days of his youth.

Silly old man ! some of my readers may exclaim. Perhaps he was, perhaps not. It is not for us to judge him. There is no knowing what you and I may come to, my friend. Fate has all to do with it, Dr. Horatio Johnson says ; and you may rely upon it he is not altogether wrong. I have just returned from a long journey. At starting, a young woman took a seat in a wrong train. The guard speedily put her right. If we could all of us only be put right when we begin our wrong journeys on life's railway ! If Fate, who may be taken as the guard, would only tell us when we

stepped into the wrong train! That young woman we spoke of would have gone to London instead of Birmingham, if the Great Western guard had not interfered. If Fate had only told Dudley Stewart that he was in the wrong train when he took his seat for the theatre on that night of Amy Clifton's benefit! But you see, Fate did nothing of the kind, Mr. Williams would say; therefore it was his fate to go wrong. And the guard knew it, when he opened the first-class door to Lord Menzwith.

For the present, however, we leave Mr. Dudley Stewart soothed and consoled in the company of those who love him, and in whose happiness his unselfish and noble nature finds its sweetest delight in these latter days.

A pilgrimage which the happy bride and bridegroom made to Cartown and the house among the trees, a few months later, revealed a pathetic episode in the

married life of Will Tunster and our old friend Dorothy.

It was evening when Jacob and Lucy, after a series of short journeys, reached Cartown ; but the sun was only just beginning to show golden signs of his departure to other lands ; so they determined to see Mr. and Mrs. Tunster that night. Full of the past, they resolved to walk the old walk together, and to order a conveyance to be in waiting for them, on their return, in the lane near the site of the old gipsy encampment. Lucy hung fondly upon Jacob's arm, and when they reached the bridge over the Cartown river, he paused to tell her how he had once stood there years before, when winter had stilled the river and covered it with ice ; and then, while the birds sung their evening songs around them, and drowsy bees and beetles buzzed a heavy chorus, he told her of his journey in the snow and the footprints which were not hers. Tears of sorrow and joy stole gently down Lucy's cheeks at the

recital ; she looked through them, up into her husband's face, and asked him if the ice was really thawed at last, and the sunshine come ? Jacob's reply was not in words ; he drew Lucy closer to his side and they wandered down the deep green lane, eloquent in their loving silence.

Highway and lane and fields were soon left behind ; and so also was the well-known stile that led to the wood, which seemed to stretch out its umbrageous arms affectionately over the children who had returned to its bosom. The rill, which had so often sung songs of joy and hope to the lovers in the long past days, whispered and murmured over the old mosses and pebbles ; glided by the same knotted roots ; chattered over the same stones ; and lost itself in the same leafy valley. What happiness to feel that there was no rebuke in the constancy of that familiar rivulet.

They found Will Tunster hale and hearty, sitting on a bench in the garden,

amusing himself with his time-honoured bugle, breathing through its old crooks the air which had once been so familiar to Lucy and Jacob, in the days of the Middleton mail. Dorothy, in a white cap and apron, with a shawl pinned over her shoulders, sat sewing close by. An old shepherd's dog (the sight of which gave Jacob a pang of memory concerning Cæsar, who died on board ship soon after Mrs. Titsy's marriage) lay asleep at the threshold of the house ; a great white cat sat lazily watching a blackbird, that was pouring forth a series of full round notes in an adjacent copse ; and a kitten was playing with a reel of cotton which had fallen from Mrs. Tunster's knee.

The meeting was a sad yet happy one. After the first surprise and the greeting on both sides were over, and Will had gone out to procure fresh cream for tea, Lucy rallied Mrs. Tunster about her old love-making, and endeavoured to elicit from her some particulars of her marriage.

"Ah, my love," said Dorothy sadly, "it's a long tale and getting rather foggy at my time of life."

"Your time of life, my dear Dorothy," said Lucy, as two fine rosy curly-headed fellows, bearing unmistakable evidence of their paternity, romped in, and then shrunk back, abashed at their own impudence, to run off laughing down the garden.

"Ah," said Dorothy, not heeding the children, "I mayn't be so very old, but I seem to be. Well, I thank God I've helped to make somebody happy. To think of you two coming, man and wife, gentleman and lady, to see me again before I am laid, with my poor old mother, in the churchyard yonder!"

"Don't talk in that way," said Lucy, rising and tenderly embracing her foster-sister."

"Well, I ought not, perhaps," said Dorothy; "but we get soberer as we get older. We may say the same things as we've said when we were young, but we say them

solemner like. There's Will, he plays the same tunes he used to play when I was a little wench, but there's not so much life in them now—their sound is more feeling as if they had had troubles like us, and had got quieter and solemner than they used to be. Poor Will! he has been a good husband to me and a good father to his children.”

It required a second and a third visit to the Tunsters, ere Lucy and Jacob understood why a deep shadow had fallen upon the dear old home among the trees. My readers are already acquainted with Dorothy's "attachment," prior to her marriage with Will. The sailor-boy referred to, in several of my previous chapters, was originally an apprentice at Cartown, and engaged to Dorothy, while both were in their teens. A bad master, and indifferent parents, had led to his running away; but Dorothy was made fully aware of his plans, and was afterwards thrown into a flutter of delight, at uncertain intervals, by his

characteristic and encouraging letters. The last she had received told her of his being made chief-mate of his ship, and spoke of his return, when he intended to put into the port of matrimony for the remainder of his days. But month after month, year after year, passed away, and Dorothy received no more tidings of her lover; and at length even she was compelled to believe, with everybody else, that he was dead.

My readers know what eventually followed; but they do not know, that hardly had Dorothy and Will been married two years, when the runaway apprentice returned from his long exile, years of which he had spent in a foreign prison. It was a great trial for Dorothy, but she bore it. The returned sailor, in despair, would have carried her off, but Dorothy calmly resisted all his temptations. Will Tunster, honest, warm-hearted Will, would have given her up and cancelled her marriage. He only lived, he said, that she might be happy.

If she told him to go away, she should never see his face again.

The woman having become the wife, was not, however, to be shaken in her honour and integrity.

"I loved thee once, Tom Huntly," she said, "and thou knows it; but now and for ever thou art as dead to me, as I thought thee when I stood in our old parish church, and bound myself, for weal or for woe, to Will Tunster, the mail-driver of Crossley."

Nevertheless there was long afterwards a shadow on the spirit of Dorothy, but she never let it fall upon Will Tunster, though she could not help showing it to Jacob and Lucy. She was a true wife to Will, combating and conquering what she regarded as the unlawful bent of her affection towards her early love. Patiently, and with enduring fortitude, did the good soul strive to forget the past, and to love, honour, and obey the man who had sworn to cherish and protect her. In the end, as the duties

of the mother succeeded to those of the wife, a higher and holier feeling took the place of respect and esteem; and Will Tunster was beloved of Dorothy his wife.

“There are homesteads which have witness’d deeds
That battle-fields, with all their banner’d pomp,
Have little to compare with. Life’s great play
May, so it have an actor great enough,
Be well performed upon a humble stage.”





CHAPTER XV.

A LETTER FROM MR. HORATIO JOHNSON.

BARMINSTER, CANADA WEST,

Tuesday, ———, 18—.



MY DEAR MR. JACOB,—This is the true land of liberty—boundless and free : too free in some respects and too boundless. You experience this painfully when your stock suddenly begin to extend their knowledge of locality. Last week I was out for three days looking up some oxen which had shown a special desire for geographical knowledge ; and while I write, my worthy son-in-law, Tom Titsy, has been away from

home for more than four and twenty hours on a similar expedition. But Tom is an excellent hand with a rifle. He kills birds better than he set up type, and Susan consoles us for his absence by saying he is sure to bring back a leash or two of partridges—which, let me observe, Mrs. Johnson cooks to perfection.

We had a rough voyage out; but, all things considered, we stood it well. I woke up one night in my shirt, rowing for my life on the hard boards of our cabin, with Mrs. Johnson alarming the whole ship by her cries for a light. I had dreamt we were shipwrecked, and during my desperate efforts to save the truest and noblest of women and the best cook in all the world I had fallen out of my berth, and continued my exertions on the floor, to the great discomfort of myself and the consternation of Mrs. J. I narrate this incident to you because it strikes me as funny, and it may relieve the monotony of an uninspired writer like myself, who do not possess

those powers which so adorn the name of Martyn.

The wonders of this country must be seen to be appreciated. Quebec particularly interested us; but Mrs. J. got nervous about the earthquake of 1663, traces of which are still shown to strangers. Poor dear soul, she fancied she felt the earth tremble under her, so we pushed on with all speed to Montreal. Suffice it to say that, after much travelling, much bargaining, and many strange incidents, I bought a farm out here at Barminster, where we are all comfortably settled, I hope, for the remainder of our natural lives.

In my next letter I intend to give you all particulars of the extent of our dominions, the quality of our stock, the profit we expect to realise by the clearance of the adjacent forest, which towers up in native grandeur to the skies. Our house is roughly built of logs and framework, but it is warm and comfortable, and I should im-

mensely like you to see us at night sitting round the fire and talking of Middleton. Sometimes I read aloud in the old Shakespeare, while Tom cleans the guns, and Susan prepares the supper, and my wife knits stockings for everybody. But Tom, as I said before, is not with us to-night, and we are rather anxious about him, a fierce snowstorm having set in, and the woods being dreadful mazes at such times. However, Tom is careful, and has, no doubt, found shelter with some distant neighbour. Winter is indeed fierce out here. I came home the other morning, after a ride across country, with the icicles hanging from my beard. I have cultivated a grey one since we parted. We are all longing for the summer, when we have arranged to begin such a vigorous attack upon the bush hard by as shall considerably add to the extent of land cleared, and upon which clearing I intend to found name, fame, and family, which shall be heard of hereafter.

Susan has just opened the outer door to look into the night. The snow is coming down in great white patches, driven with a hissing noise by the wind. She thinks we ought to have the bell rung and the horns blown, for fear he may have lost his way. Women are naturally timid, though Mrs. J. and Susan have taken to our rough life here with a spirit that is delightful to contemplate. However, in deference to their anxiety I must leave off writing to-night and see that the horns are blown, and well blown, though I feel quite satisfied Tom is all right somewhere.

Moniti meliora sequamur! A week has passed away since I left off writing. The woman's instinct was in part right. Mrs. Titsy in her old remarkable way had more than once said she was sure something was going to happen on the night when I began writing this letter. She felt all over as if something were going to happen. She did not think it was anything very serious, but she had her feelings, and there was no deny-

ing them. She was right. Tom did not return for five days from his first setting out. We were all in the most miserable and abject state of alarm and anxiety about him. We sent out our hands to search in all directions, and at last they found him safely housed and the few cattle which he went after duly sheltered.

But what a story Tom has brought home ! I have always been a believer in the destiny that doth shape our ends, rough hew them how we may : but I am becoming more and more a confirmed and fixed fatalist, although, paradoxical as it may appear to you, there is not in my mind the shadow of a doubt about punishments and rewards belonging to this life as well as to the state to come. Tom was lost in the snow, but eventually the beacon light of a shanty, whose occupants had been living in the bush, brought him to a friendly haven. He found inside a woman, two children, and a rough looking fellow who had gone shares in the labour of the woman's husband. The woman was

young, had been good looking, and was as dark as a gipsy. Her husband had been out for two days, having started to shoot for the pot. The children were fierce, black-eyed, sturdy little fellows. Tom got refreshment and permission to remain until the morning. He was pleased to find that the woman knew something about Dinsley county in the old land. When she found that Tom knew the same place, however, she was anxious to speak of other subjects; but she had mentioned Cartown, where you were at school, you know, and Tom was so deeply interested and talked so much about the fine drives he had had with a kind, dear master of his through that district, that at last the woman talked about the green lanes thereabouts, and then began to cry and moan, and rock herself to and fro, and bewail her unhappy lot. Whereupon the rough brute I have spoken of laughed and mocked and sneered at her, and he and Tom nearly came to blows about it. However, the vagabond slunk off soon after-

wards, and the woman, drying her eyes, sat up and evidently shook off the feeling that had overcome her, but would say no more. In the morning she begged Tom to stay until this man, who had gone out early to seek his comrade, returned, and then she spoke again of Dinsley county, and he mentioned his visit to you at Cartown school. She would have you described to her, and she said she knew you. Then she began to cry and said she did not know you. Tom got alarmed about the poor creature. Her two boys seized him by the legs and kicked him, thinking he had hurt their mother. They shook their little fists at him. In due time the searcher returned, and looked less brutal than when he went out. He said he had found the master, this woman's husband, but they must go out to him as he could not come to them. Tom went forth with the rest, and not more than two miles from home they found, lying beside the embers of a burnt-out fire which had been made in the shade

of a tree where the snow had been partially cleared, the frozen corpse of Julius Jennings.


Such are the decrees of fate—such the certain punishment of crime, for none can doubt that Jennings was implicated in the murder of our poor friend Silas Collinson. His widow now tells us she was a gipsy girl—her name Miriam ; that she was married to Jennings according to the ceremonies of her tribe, her husband having become one of them. They had been unable to remain in England, she says, because of some great debt for which, her husband informed her, he was responsible; and after spending some years in America, buying goods and hawking them, they had, about a year ago, come to Canada to live in the bush as best they could, nothing having prospered with them. Strange creatures, women ; they carry in their hearts the Divine inspiration. Notwithstanding her association with the murderer Jennings, Mrs. Titsy and my wife,

Mrs. J., have begged me to let the poor, broken-down creature come to live with us—she and her fierce, black-eyed gipsy boys. Jennings's comrade has started off for Montreal, thinking the weather is clearing; but the snow has come on again, and he is certain to come to a similar end to that of Jennings, as certain as I am writing this strange letter to you, unless he meets with speedy shelter. He is evidently a bad fellow—bad in grain. We want all the assistance we can get, and I cannot baulk such a genuine piece of benevolence, so Mrs. Miriam—that is to be her name, we cannot call her Jennings—is coming to us, with her pair of little ragamuffins, and in the summer we shall rig up a more extensive establishment, which will be rendered absolutely necessary ere long by the arrival of other additions to our colonial household. I shall write to you again soon, and with the united best wishes of all here to yourself and the Mrs. Martyn that is

to be, I am ever yours truly, and to command,

HORATIO JOHNSON.

P.S. This has been written a fortnight, but no opportunity of posting has arisen until to-day. I therefore open the letter to repeat that we are all well and happy. Mrs. Miriam is with us, and a good creature she is; and quite pretty still, so Susan says. The woman must have gone through a sight of trouble and misery. Her boys will make first-rate cattle-minders. They are up to all sorts of tricks, and their occasional laughter makes our Canadian home seem all the more homely. Yesterday some wolves, pressed by hunger, howled about the place. I confess I would rather hear the watchdog's honest bark. Mrs. Miriam's eldest boy wanted to go out and fight them. We shall do battle with these pests, however, by civilization, which comes with careful clearings. I feel quite young again with the



incentives to industry that are about me, and happier than ever I was in my life, and the more so that all my family now, in which I include Tom and Susan, have accepted the stupid old doctor's philosophy that everything happens for the best.





CHAPTER XVI.

CLOSING SCENES.




MAGAR'S precaution with regard to the publication of his confession was in the interest of an accomplice. This was no other than the man who led the attack on the *Star* printing offices. The woman who visited the criminal in his last hours received Magar's instructions to warn the Middleton Bruiser, in order that the fellow might get out of the country. According to Magar's confession, the villain was concealed at the mill on that fatal 15th of November for the purpose of playing his part in the murder. Magar affirmed that this hired assassin

struck the fatal blow. The same hand was employed to get rid of Susan. It was the Middleton Bruiser who made her acquaintance on board ship, and tried to push her overboard. Magar always understood that the fellow had accomplished his mission. At first the Bruiser had said so; but presently he told Magar the truth, and then sent forged letters from the States. In telling his story, Magar dwelt upon the deceitful part which the Bruiser had played. "If," said the late Mayor of Middleton, "he had been true one way or the other I should not have been in this position; if he had told me that Susan Harley was alive I should have got away from England; I might have found her out in America and married her. But it was not to be: I never was quite satisfied about the Bruiser except as to his doing anything for money. I always repented of what was done, but I had begun to get over the fear and remorse of it when that woman turned up like a ghost, and the terror of that moment was as


bad as when I heard him struck down and cry out—that screech which seemed to freeze me where I stood. It has been in my ears many a time, his awful scream, but I'd begun to get over it ; I'd begun to leave off slipping in his blood at nights just as I was getting into bed ; it had been getting more and more like a bad dream as I prospered and came to be trusted by the town as a magistrate. She brought it all back with her white face and staring eyes. If I'd my time to come over again I'd sooner be the man murdered than one concerned in his death. Julius Jennings was present when Silas was killed, but he struck no blow, and Tom Titsy knew no more of it than the child unborn."

I supplement this extract from Magar's confession, with an episode from the second letter of Mr. Horatio Johnson. The end of the comrade of Julius Jennings was predicted in the letter set forth in my previous chapter. Here is the sequel to the colonial part of this history :—



“The comrade of Jennings who made an effort to reach Montreal, as I have described, was no doubt mixed up in the Middleton tragedy. Mrs. Miriam says that one night soon after the execution of Magar her husband brought him home. This was when they were living in America, and it was chiefly through this man that they determined to try Canada. Her husband did not like him, but there was something between them which made it necessary that they should be friends, and when the fellow was drunk he used to let out incidents of his former career which gave her days of dread and uneasiness, gipsy as she was. He knew a great deal about Middleton, and on dark nights when the wind was high he drank hard, and then had strange fits of terror and fury, and cursing and praying, that drove Jennings almost wild. I don't think she knows all, but she has led a dreadful life with those two rascals, though Jennings does not seem to have behaved what may be called unkindly to her. But

to proceed : I told you before that the fellow would never reach Montreal, and he did not. The snow came on again about two hours after he left, and the wind seemed as if it blew ice. It is fatal to fall asleep in such storms, but, after great fatigue in the cold, it is seldom that nature is proof against the temptation. Two days after his departure he was found dead in the snow, and on the news reaching us, which it did, because it was thought he might be one of my people, I extemporised a sleigh, and Tom drove Susan over to see the body. This was for my curiosity and satisfaction. It had occurred to me that in this wretch she might discover her acquaintance of the steamer. There is more in 'presentiments' than we are willing to admit. I try to laugh Mrs. J. out of her superstitious feelings about death-ticks, ear-burnings, walking-over-your-grave sensations, unlucky birds, and fatal Fridays, but secretly I sympathise with her, and have cause. It came into my mind in the strangest way



that this dead man in the snow was Susan's villain of the steamer, and it was so. Susan hesitated at first, but afterwards she had no doubt about it, and I believe him to be the villain known in Middleton as the Bruiser, that same rascal who was at the beck and call of Grippe, and whom Mr. W. Williams had the honour of bruising on the day when Grippe seized poor Mr. Martyn's premises."

My story is coming to an end. Jacob's literary successes increased and multiplied, but not without much hard work. It was a fortunate thing that he had made a position with his pen, for the failure of a well-known bank, in which a large amount of the Thornton funds were invested, swept away nearly the whole of Lucy's private fortune. This was an incident in their lives which only tended to bind the young people closer together. To Jacob Lucy's loss was almost a matter of congratulation. His romantic notions of love and independ-

ence had often been secretly arrayed against his wife's fortune. Indeed, the subject had more than once formed a topic of conversation between them. For example, one evening, when they were gossiping over a letter from Mr. Thornton about the investment of some moneys which had just fallen in from a lapsed mortgage (this was before the bank failure), Jacob said—

“Lucy, my dear, I wish you had no funds to invest.”

“I know you do, Jacob, and that is the only subject about which we are ever likely to differ.”

She looked up from a book of poems, and laid her hand upon her husband's shoulder, glancing at the work he was reading; it was a treatise on political economy.

“It had been the dream of my life,” said Jacob, laying aside his book, “to win you a home with my single arm—to carve out a way for both of us, to be your champion and protector, and thus to prove to you the strength and quality of my love.”

“ You don’t like the Thornton sovereigns, poor dear Jacob,” said Lucy, sitting on a cushion at his feet, and laying her head upon his knees. “ Suppose we give them away, dear, or throw them into the river.”

“ You always laugh at me,” said Jacob.

“ No, dear, I do not ; but it is curious that one so wise and clever as you are should take such an odd view of your riches.”

“ *Your* riches, dear,” said Jacob.

“ Yours, you unkind, tyrannical fellow,” said Lucy.

Jacob patted her brown silky hair, and stooped to kiss her forehead.

“ You will never look at the point earnestly, Lucy,” said Jacob.

How was it that Jacob was reading “ Political Economy,” and Lucy a book of poems ?

“ Then I will, dear, for once,” said Lucy, taking his hand, and looking, not at her husband this time, but straight into the fire, that glowed lovingly upon her sweet, tender

face. "You make money by your books and your writings, but you work hard, Jacob; you know, dear, you are often up in your room writing when you ought to be in bed; I have stood at the door and heard your pen racing over the paper."

"My dear love," said Jacob.

"You are not to interrupt me. I have heard of cases where an author has not been able to continue his labours from ill health and from many other causes; and then, instead of being free, he has been borne down by a wife and children. Now, you are to hear me to the end, dear; don't fidget so with your feet. Knowing the uncertainties of literary work, would it not be some consolation to you, were you a wife, loving your husband with all your heart and soul, to know that there was no possibility of your being a burthen and a care, and a drawback to the man whom you adored and loved?"

"My dear Lucy, there is good sense in what you say, and I have not the heart to

oppose it. You are a very practical little woman ; you always were much more so than I could have imagined ; where do you get your worldly wisdom, love ?”

“ I don’t know, dear ; one of my lady tutors was the widow of an author, a learned doctor of Oxford—a great philosopher ; and do I not see how many heartrending letters you receive from authors ?”

“ Yes, dear, they are not all as fortunate as Jacob Martyn.”

“ As clever, you should say, Jacob.”

“ No, dear, as fortunate ; the public is a fickle patron, but once it takes to a writer, it is his own fault if he is not always a favourite.”

“ But how long it is before the public makes up its mind !” said Lucy. “ Here is a poet who is charming, full of new thoughts, and as musical as Moore ; and you say his books do not sell, and he has not yet had a five-pound note from his publishers.”

"The public will discover his merits when he is dead, poor fellow. He goes in for fame ; I write for the present."

It was soon after some such conjugal gossip as this that the ill news of the bank came to Mortimer House. For a moment Jacob felt a weight lifted off his mind ; but before the day was over he regretted the loss deeply. He did not want Lucy's money, and yet he was angry at the loss ; while, on the contrary, Lucy received the news with the greatest equanimity.

"My dear Jacob, don't trouble about it ; there is still a little left. Besides, dear, you never cared for it."

"I do now."

"Only for my sake—only because you think the loss of it grieves me."

"No, dear, for my own. If we had given it away, or thrown it into the river, as you once suggested," said Jacob ; "but to be done out of it in this way!"

"There, dear ! See—look in my face—I believe I am happier now that it is gone.



Closing Scenes.

We shall love each other all the more, if that were possible. Think of those poor people who have no other resources—widows and orphans perhaps !”

“ You are an angel,” said Jacob, kissing his wife.

“ A poor one, bless her heart,” said old Thornton, who had entered the room unperceived ; “ a poor angel, my dear,” said the old man, as Lucy flung her arms round his neck and kissed him.

“ Richer even now than many of the people who ride in the Row, and try to mask their empty purses and mortgaged estates in hollow smiles and *badinage*,” said Lucy.

“ Now, by my soul, it does me good to see you two in this spirit,” exclaimed Uncle Thornton. “ I have been in a furious rage for hours, and in despair, too—a miserable, broken-hearted dog ! If it had been my own money that had gone—but Lucy’s, my dead grandson’s money, hoarded by my brother to do justice with at

last ! Good Lord ! it makes me sick to think of it. Give me some sherry, Jacob Martyn."

Sherry was brought. The old man helped himself liberally.

"Don't be downhearted, Uncle Thornton. We are well off. I am making a good income. A short time since I should have liked nothing better than this loss. That money has been the only little shadow between my wife and I. But I have become proud and ambitious lately. I had been thinking of buying an estate in the county of Dinsley ; and I suppose I am being punished a little for my ingratitude. But it is all for the best. I shall set to work now in deeper earnest than heretofore."

"There ! now that is all we are going to say about it. We shall take a pleasant house somewhere near Richmond, and live quietly. There—no more to-night."

"But, Lucy, my child——" began Uncle Thornton.

“No more about money to-night; we will have some music.”

“That is right,” said Jacob. “She is right, uncle, we will defer the subject.”

Lucy sat down to her harp and conjured from the glowing strings that dreamy story of the happy land; and when the melody had taken full possession of Jacob’s memory she sung the simple words with the sympathetic tenderness of the old days; while Uncle Thornton nodded his white head to the music and sipped his sherry in silence.





CHAPTER XVII.

MR. BONSALL AS A CABINET MINISTER SEEKS
RE-ELECTION FOR MIDDLETON AND IS
OPPOSED.



UNCLE THORNTON had often persuaded Jacob Martyn to go into Parliament. It was the fear of being compelled to abandon this ambitious project that made the bank failure seem more serious than it was. Within a few days of the stoppage of the establishment it was announced that there would be a dividend of ten shillings in the pound. Thus it was not necessary that the Martyns should leave Piccadilly. Moreover, Jacob had threatened that he would

show him how a pen which condescended to scribble fairy tales could also create real as well as imaginary golden eggs ; and he was as good as his word, for he made arrangements with his publishers for a series of new works, which they were glad to undertake on terms that were most advantageous to the author.

Meanwhile a vacancy occurred in the representation of Middleton. Mr. Bonsall had been appointed a member of the Ministry. It was not generally the custom to oppose a member under these circumstances, but that proud old gentleman, Uncle Thornton, came in post haste to Jacob with the *Times* in his pocket to urge afresh his desire that Jacob should go in for Parliamentary honours.

“ This Bonsall is not popular either at Middleton or with his own party in the House ; they tell me at the Conservative that he is a low-bred fellow, a money-grubber, one of your self-made, hard-fisted

democrats who neither deserves consideration nor respect."

"Ah, but, Uncle Thornton, you are such an extreme Tory, you know," said Jacob. "You stand up for blood; if you had lived in the days of the Stuarts you would have believed in the divine right of Kings."

"And what would you have gone in for, my dear friend?" said Uncle Thornton, gravely. "Surely you would not have been on the side of that tyrant Cromwell with his hollow cant and his cut-throat fingers; why, Colonel Thornton, a brave ancestor of Lucy's, fell fighting for his King at Newark—and——"

"No, Uncle Thornton, I do not think I should have been a Roundhead."

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed the old gentleman.

"I should have been led away by the picturesqueness of the Cavaliers, but there is no question now about the——"

"Don't say any more, my dear boy.

You know how I love you. You are for the Throne and the Constitution now, are you not ?”

“Yes, yes,” said Jacob, “and also for the people.”

“Well, well, so are we all. Bonsall behaved like a blackguard to your father, you have told me so often ; apart from politics and from my cherished hope of seeing you in the House, it would be legitimate and honourable revenge to turn Bonsall out.”

“It would,” said Jacob, “you have me there, uncle ; yes, you score twenty points at least when you remind me of what I owe to the dead—and the living. Give me an hour for consideration. On second thoughts let me go and see Squire Northcotes.”

“That is a friendly thought,” said the proud representative of Thornton glories.

“Bradshaw” was consulted at once, Lucy’s opinion was asked, and it confirmed

Jacob's own views. While arrangements were being made to catch the first train, Jacob drafted an address "to the free and independent Burgesses of Middleton-in-the-Water." When he arrived at the scene of action he found that the Squire had himself been invited to stand. Mr. Northcotes was not, however, inclined to consent. He thought it ungracious to oppose Bonsall under the circumstances. He admitted that Bonsall deserved it for various reasons; and when Jacob sat down and told him the story of the *Middleton Star*, the Squire rattled his gold and silver, and swore that Bonsall should never again sit for Middleton unopposed, damme, as long as he had one guinea to rattle against another in fighting him.

The end was that Jacob put aside his own half-hearted designs upon the seat, and, with the aid of the popular author, Squire Northcotes sent out an address which astonished all parties, and threw the little town of Middleton into a state of

delightful excitement. Solicitors were retained, public-houses were opened, printing-presses were set to work, burgess-lists were in great demand, ward meetings were summoned, corrupt palms began to itch ; and there was such a general upheaving of local sentiment as Middleton had not experienced since the time of Bonsall's return under the auspices of Mr. Augustus Martyn.

As luck would have it, there was a split among the sitting member's own friends. The Yellows had been in power too long for the maintenance of that unity which we are always reminded on these occasions is strength. The want of competition for corporate honours, on the part of the Reds, had induced the Yellows to fight among themselves ; and their discussions, as reported in the *Middleton Guardian*, were marvels of civic personality.

A feud more particularly damaging to the party had sprung up concerning the question of a public fountain. Mr. Bon-

sall, M.P., had made the little borough a present of £500 for an ornamental fountain; and the Yellows had quarrelled about the site. Without any interference from the long trodden down and dispirited Reds, the Yellows had split up into sections, each with its distinct scheme for an ornamental fountain; and the excitement was at its height when Mr. Bonsall appealed to his constituents for re-election.

The smaller section involved in the fountain dispute, to a man, gave their adhesion to the Red candidate, whom the *Guardian* described as "a gentleman who, whilst giving an independent support to our great and glorious institutions, would gladly aid in amending them and increasing their stability; a gentleman who would ever be found recording his vote in the true interests of the nation, rendering allegiance to the throne, and upholding that civil and religious liberty for which our fathers had fought and bled in many a field of carnage. Mr. Northcotes, who

would fight under the crimson banner, had many claims upon the electors. Native, and to the manner born, he had been educated and brought up in the locality, and had ever taken a heartfelt interest in the welfare of the ancient and loyal borough of Middleton. Blessed with a fortune far beyond that of many a rich country gentleman, Squire Northcotes had travelled much; he had visited foreign countries; he had sojourned under the sunny skies of Italy, he had climbed the Scottish mountains; he had visited the pine forests of America, and had slept at the foot of Snowdon in Wales; but nowhere, the *Guardian* was assured, had he found a spot more delightful to him than their own little borough, which it was now his highest ambition to represent in the great legislative assembly of England, and the welfare of which it would always be the dearest wish of his heart to promote in every possible way. The time had come for the honest, manly, and independent electors of

Middleton to shake off the shackles of a clique, and send to Parliament a worthy, enlightened, sagacious, wealthy, and able man, belonging to themselves, raised amongst them, born in their midst—a man who would do credit to the State, and whose representation would exalt Middleton-in-the-Water to a pitch of greatness the height of which was almost too dazzling for imagination.”

Never had the *Guardian* been so eloquent in its eulogy ; and never so satirically scorching—its satire burnt and sere the reputation of Mr. Bonsall to such an extent that many of the excited Reds thought it would be impossible for him to hold up his head again in Middleton. “Persevering and industrious the hon. member had been, it is true,” said the *Guardian*, “but persevering and industrious in what?—in earning the gratitude of a time-serving Ministry, by never giving a vote against them, even in the interest of Middleton, where her most ancient rights were concerned—per-

severing and industrious in truckling to the most corrupt Ministry that had ever sacrificed the independence and reputation of a great country. And for what? for place and pension, for the sweets of office! Would Middleton-in-the-Water ratify this? Never!!!”

“Three cheers for the *Guardian*! Hooray! hooray!” cried the Reds, when the sprightly reporter of the local journal appeared on the nomination day.

“Bah! bah! bah!” groaned the Yellows.

The ground-floor of the old Town Hall was fitted up for the hustings. It was a hot July morning when that same reporter, on the principle of the early bird, presented himself at the Town Hall, with several others from the county town hard by, to give an account of the exciting speeches of the nomination day.

The first to show himself upon the hustings was the mayor, who was greeted with three cheers. Then came the crier, and several civic officers. Next, bowing and

smiling, and looking as pleasant as he possibly could, came Mr. Bonsall. A storm of hisses and yells saluted him; but still he smiled and bowed. "Place and pension!" shouted a man in front. "Who sold himself to the Government?" shouted another; and then there were a hundred mingled cries which the reporters tried to place upon their notes; but they got no further than "Down with the clique!" "Monkey Bonsall!" "How about the five hundred?" "Who stole the donkey?" "Go home!" "Who robbed the poor?" "Who killed poor Martyn?" "Traitor!" "No more cliques!" "Nosey Bonsall!" Meanwhile the crowd grew and grew, and the summer sun blazed in, hot and red, upon the bellowing throng, which swayed to and fro, hither and thither—a sea of heads and eyes terrible to Mr. Bonsall and his supporters.

Presently the hissing and impertinent epithets which had been heaped upon Bonsall were changed to cheering (only faintly interrupted by the dispirited Yellows) upon


the entrance of Squire Northcotes, who rattled his money, and laughed and chatted to Mr. Jacob Martyn, who looked as fresh and bright as the crimson geranium in his button-hole. "Northcotes for ever!" "The people's friend!" "Red for ever!" "Down with the other clique!" shouted persistent bodies of factory operatives, who had screeched and roared at Bonsall. The crowd went on increasing, and, as it grew, so did the number of Squire Northcote's supporters increase, though they were packed in with many of Bonsall's friends. "Bully Northcotes!" shouted a determined-looking fellow near the door! "Cockey Northcotes! Bah! bah!" A storm of hisses followed, but the Yellow voter soon found allies; "Purse-proud Northcotes!" they cried. "Skinflint!" responded the Reds. "Who gave his servants dog's-meat?" cried a blundering coalheaver. "Pump-water Bonsall!" shouted a shrill voice from the opposite side of the hall. This was followed by a roar of laughter, and a fight be-

tween a Red and a Yellow, the latter having sought to smother the Red laugh by asking a prominent supporter of the Squire "Who murdered his poor old mother?" Two policemen made a show of interference, but without the smallest success; the town-crier rang his bell furiously, and in vain the mayor waved his civic hand for silence.

At this juncture the attention of the free and independents of Middleton was attracted to a gallery which had been set apart for the lady friends of the members. Suddenly the fighting ceased, and a round of cheers saluted the entrance of Mrs. Martyn and Mrs. Ferris, who were conducted to seats by Mr. Windgate Williams, that gentleman being attired in the height of manly fashion. "Three cheers for the ladies" was demanded and given again and again, and acknowledged with such lively sweetness by the two new occupants of the gallery that the other women present began to scandalise and hate Mrs. Martyn and Mrs. Ferris on the spot; and well

they might, for the new comers outshone them all.

Gazing on these sunny beauties was like a dream of fair women. So far as complexion went, and bright eyes, they might have been sisters ; but there was a piquancy in Mrs. Ferris's style which gave her altogether a different appearance to Jacob's wife, whose quiet, sober sweetness was a good foil for the lively little wife of the famous actor. Edith wore a coquettish hat, trimmed with ostrich feathers and crimson ribbon. She fixed her bright eyes upon Squire Northcotes, who rattled his gold and silver at her, and nodded and bowed in a manner that was quite delightful to behold. Lucy wore a pretty grey bonnet, and her hair was bound close to her head. She looked down upon the crowd, through her large blue eyes, and there was an unwonted flush upon her cheeks, and an expression, half fear, half anxiety, half pleasure on her fair round features, which, in Jacob's eyes, made her



look more beautiful than ever. By Mr. Williams's advice she had delicately combined the colours red and yellow, in a ribbon which she wore round her neck—a tribute to both parties, and a tribute which did not go unnoticed or unrewarded. Mrs. Ferris had, however, insisted upon carrying "the colours" unqualified.

"We must not let them see that we are taking advantage of their differences," Mr. Williams said; and he therefore wore a rosette of yellow and red himself.

So far as political feeling went Windgate was with the Yellows. He reconciled his conscientious scruples with his actions by joining himself to the minority in the fountain dispute, and revenging himself upon Bonsall for his treachery to his deceased friend. Jacob, on the contrary, had not inherited his father's political opinions; and although he had seldom had cause to express any direct or defined views of government, his opinions were Red—"crimson to the core," he told Mrs. Ferris.

When an approach to order had been accomplished, the formalities of the time were duly performed, and the candidates were proposed and seconded. The action of the gentleman who proposed Mr. Bonsall was eloquent in the extreme, assisted as it was by hoarse cries of "Chair," "Order," "Hear," and "Turn 'em out," "Put 'em under their own founting," "Who killed his mother?" "Dog's meat," "Red for ever," "Yellow for ever." Mr. Bonsall said a great deal, to judge from his manner; and the reporters appeared to be getting most of what he said upon their notes; but the papers only succeeded in giving a very meagre report of his oration.

Long before Mr. Bonsall sat down there was a cry of "Martyn," "Mr. Martyn." "Jacob Martyn." The popular author had been recognised, and nothing would satisfy the crowd but a speech from Mr. Martyn, and he was the only speaker who secured the respect and attention of the meeting. Squire Northcotes himself could not obtain

anything like attention ; but he was much more successful than Mr. Bonsall ; and the severest thing demanded of him was, " Is it true you starve your servants ? " " Ask the servants themselves, my man ; yonder stands one of them ; " and amidst cheers and laughter the Squire pointed to his fat coachman, who was blushing and frowning at the Yellows from a secure corner near the platform. " Does he look starved ? " shouted the Squire in triumph. " No ; nor don't feel like it," said the coachman, conquering his bashfulness, and looking defiantly at his master's detractors. This was regarded as one of the best sallies of the day. It restored the crowd to something like good humour, and brought down a ringing cheer. " Does he look starved ? " said the Squire's gold and silver, amidst cries of " No, no," " Bravo, coachy," and " Three cheers for the fat 'un."

At length the moment came for electors and non-electors to hold up their hands for the man of their choice. The town-crier

rang his bell ; the fat coachman wiped his burning face ; the sun blazed hotter and hotter upon the open windows of the hall ; the Squire rattled his gold and silver ; Mr. Bonsall fidgeted with his hat ; and the mayor, rising solemnly and lifting his hand authoritatively, demanded a show of hands for Mr. Bonsall. ‘

A sudden and startling array of dirty palms was exhibited, amidst cheers and yells and hissing ; and for a moment Mr. Windgate Williams confessed that he believed Bonsall had won the show of hands ; but when the friends of Squire Northcotes came to hold up their hands, the majority was unmistakable, and the mayor’s declaration was received with rounds of cheering, led by Mr. Williams, and acknowledged by the Squire, who nodded at Mrs. Paul Ferris, and agitated his gold and silver to an alarming extent.

A poll was demanded for Mr. Bonsall, whereupon the contending parties separated to complete their arrangements for the mor-

row. There were fights innumerable during the afternoon ; rival bands of music met and broke their instruments over each other's heads ; the Yellow drummer was thrust head foremost into his own drum ; and Mr. Bonsall was daringly hustled in the streets by half a dozen rollicking operatives from the factory that still looked out of its many windows on the ruin of Jacob Martyn's garden.

Jacob and his friends were heartily glad when night came, and quiet began to put in a claim for consideration ; though it was not until morning dawned that Middleton-in-the-Water could be said to be in repose. Long after midnight mysterious groups of men were scattered hither and thither about the streets, whispering in the shadows of old gabled houses, or keeping watch over the public-house haunts of either party, while solitary horsemen patrolled the suburbs of the town, and occasionally interrogated pedestrians, who crept away by back streets on political journeys into the adjacent vil-

lages ; for the Bonsall faction had unloosed their purse strings, and voters who had promised the Reds began to disappear, even before nightfall.

A stranger visiting Middleton on this eventful night might have imagined the country to be on the eve of a great revolution, expecting it to burst out fierce and bloody on the next day ; so stealthily, so thievishly did men, singly and in groups, move about—peering into dark corners, peeping through keyholes, trying doors, and disappearing in dark alleys.

The same stranger would have been highly amused could he have drawn up the blinds or peeped into Dr. Smythe's dining-room at Grosvenor House, close by the Cartown river, and near the scene of the opening chapter of this book. The Doctor was an enthusiastic Red. With the assistance of Mr. Windgate Williams, he had induced a dozen "doubtful" voters to sup with him. These were "needy" men who had accepted bribes from Bonsall—poor

fellows who had been unable to withstand temptation. They had in other days voted Yellow ; but had this time promised Squire Northcotes, and had been "got at" by the other side in consequence.

After supper they sang and were merry. Mr. Williams proposed the Doctor's health. The Doctor replied, and proposed the editor's health, and in doing so alluded in touching terms to the once famous *Middleton Star*. Then he asked the electors to look back to the old days when Mr. Alfred Martyn was amongst them. They responded heartily to the Doctor's eloquent appeals to their sympathy, and thus a good understanding was brought about. Mr. Williams supplemented the Doctor's speech by a carefully prepared narrative of Bon-sall's conduct in connection with the defunct paper and the deceased proprietor ; and while Williams was talking the Doctor was paying marked attention to the creature comforts of his guests. The combined influence of oratory and wine worked won-

ders upon the sympathies of the doubtfuls. Some of them suddenly broke into unmistakable applause at the editor's best points ; one cried " Shame," another shook his head, while a third said he wished he had known all this before.

At length, when the time seemed ripe for definite action, Williams, leaping upon a chair, exclaimed, " And so let us give three cheers for Squire Northcotes !" It was cleverly done. The responsive hurrahs brought an angry message from Mrs. Smythe, which the Doctor treated with proud indifference, proposing renewed cheers for Northcotes, and " Red for ever !"

As morning dawned sleep stole over the Doctor's dining-room. The eminent practitioner was snugly reposing on a sofa. Mr. Williams was reclining upon two chairs placed across the doorway ; and the twelve doubtfuls were lying about in various directions—some under the table, and some upon the hearth. A rubicund greengrocer

sat transfixed in the Doctor's arm-chair at the bottom of the table, gasping and snoring in happy unison with his fellows beneath it.

At daylight the Doctor's man brought in coffee, and the doubtfuls, under the superintendence of Williams, washed themselves in detachments of twos and threes. Several complained of headache, but the Doctor soon made these all right. After breakfast they adjourned to the drawing-room, where the youngest Miss Smythe, who had been awakened purposely by the Doctor's orders, treated the assembled doubtfuls to vocal music, which in due time revived some of their previous enthusiasm. The victory was completed by Williams singing a song with a rattling chorus, in which the free and independent doubtfuls joined, to the great alarm and indignation of the Doctor's wife, who vowed she would never forgive this insult to herself and daughters.

Then Williams, rubbing his eyes and

looking round as if in a little doubt as to the position, but quite satisfied in his own mind, said, "Now, my friends, one cheer more—who is it for?" "Northcotes!" they replied as one man, "Northcotes for ever! Northcotes, and down with the clique!"

As soon as the poll opened that morning, the doubtfuls, with the Doctor at their head, polled plumpers for Northcotes; and when the polling was at an end, Mr. Bonsall was defeated, and Squire Northcotes duly elected by a majority of twelve.

It was a great fall for the would-be Minister. With the sweets of office and the summit of his ambitious hopes within reach, he came to deserved grief for his insincerity and ingratitude.

Jacob could not help feeling a certain satisfaction in being enabled to tell Mr. Bonsall that he, the son of Alfred Martyn, had been the chief means of his punishment.

Mr. Cavendish Thornton, who was

present, with the Hon. Max Walton, at the declaration of the poll, was greatly disappointed at the part which Jacob had played, though it was some consolation to the old gentleman that the leading London papers published articles upon Jacob Martyn's speech, which was pronounced to be full of original thought and indicative of legislative power.

Mr. Martyn was strongly advised to seek a career in Parliament, and Mr. Thornton felt that after this he would be able to induce his dear Lucy's husband to humour his wishes in this respect. But Jacob never meddled with politics again ; and, in due time, when several little Martyns began to climb the old man's knees, he came down from his high estate, and confessed that perhaps Jacob was right in cultivating domestic comfort rather than seeking for the questionable honours of parliamentary life. Lucy had no doubt about the wisdom of Jacob's decision in the matter ; and she was all the more convinced of it when she

learnt that the crowd of unattended ladies whom she met in society without their husbands were the wives of members of Parliament, Ministers, and others, who were all occupied in governing their country.





CHAPTER XVIII.

WHICH ENDS THIS STRANGE, EVENTFUL
HISTORY.



AS time wore on Jacob found it necessary to employ a secretary. When he told his wife the history of his relationship with Mr. Windgate Williams, she agreed with Jacob that no time should be lost in offering the appointment to his early friend.

"Well," said Windgate Williams to his shadow, which was reposing in gigantic proportions on the fire-lighted hearth of Mrs. Smick's first floor, "I don't think I can refuse it; my experience will be valu-

able to him, and the work will be light. Ah, it's the way with these smart young fellows, they go ahead at first at a dashing rate, but they pull up after a while ; deuced clever, Jacob Martyn—there's no mistake about that—and he knows the value of Windgate Williams — that is not the smallest evidence of his wisdom.”

For Jacob Martyn's sake, therefore, Mr. Williams returned to London ; but he was not permitted to leave the scene of his distinguished labours at Dinsley until he had been entertained at a complimentary dinner by a select party of his admirers, at whose hands he received a testimonial of “their esteem and regard, and of the high respect in which they held his eminent abilities, and as some small acknowledgment of the gratitude they felt in respect of his services in the cause of liberty and truth.” Mr. Crooks made the presentation, on behalf of the numerous subscribers, in a speech of studied eloquence. The popular editor never delivered a more telling ac-

dress than that in which his thanks for this magnificent present were expressed. After telling the company that the tongue upon such an occasion failed to interpret the feelings of the heart, he delivered himself of an oration lasting more than half an hour, commenced with an audible sob, and closed with a palpable tear.

Thus Mrs. Smick, deprived of her famous lodger, found herself called upon to advertise for a successor, "Which it were," as she remarked to a young greengrocer, who had received permission to pay his addresses to Jumbo, "satisfactory to know as you are not beholding to one gentleman no more than another, seeing, as poor Smick often said, that there was as good fish out of the sea as ever went into it, and it was not as if she was a reglar lodging-house keeper, having seen better times, whereby persons might be suspicious that she did not buy her own tea and sugar, or give all the cold meat from the tables to the poor; but being above such ways,

gentlemen knew as her house was a home to them, and, therefore, her rooms was always jumped at by one or another as soon as she put her paper in the window, just as fast as the haddicks used to jump at the mussil baits, when poor dear Smick used to amuse himself with fishing ; but as I was a-saying, which it were not for me to——”

At this part of Mrs. Smick's edifying harangue on the respectability and homely character of her establishment, Miss Jumbo, who had been swallowing her mother's words with open mouth, and beating time with a hot smoothing-iron, to the delight of her ambitious lover, dropped the iron upon her mother's toes, which brought Mrs. Smick's remarks to such a sudden and demonstrative full stop that the wretched greengrocer fell upon his knees and begged for mercy. Jumbo feared he had suddenly gone mad ; but the terrified dealer in cabbages soon afterwards explained that his love for Miss Smick was so overpower-

ing, and his fear of losing her so strong upon him at the moment of Mrs. Smick's unexpected shriek of rage, that he was carried away by his feelings, which laboured under the sudden impression that he had mortally offended the lady who, of all others in the world, he would choose for a mother-in-law. Some people, who envy the greatness of the Smicks, and the chance which Miss Smick has of being married, say that the greengrocer is no better than a harmless idiot, and that Jumbo will be a capital match for him; but those who heard his prompt reply to Mrs. Smick with regard to his intentions, would, as that lady said, "not make themselves ridiculous by their hobervations, which it were not looks that she regarded, and the young man said straight out that his intentions were strictly honourable, and a little shop of his own, which his father had bought him, and a garden, and all rent free, with two rooms ready furnished, and serving many of the gentry, which it were not everybody as

could make such a start as that, and the banns should certainly be put up, and let them as had any objectshun state it then, or for ever hold their peace."

Long before the close of the London season, every year, Mr. and Mrs. Martyn leave Mortimer House for Neathville. Jacob has purchased that pretty house on the cliffs above the sea. When the red light of the sun is fading out, and the night begins its silent march over the waters, the factory hymn may often be heard, as if going forth to join the twilight mists. A harp accompaniment breaks sweetly in upon the fresh child voices that are singing the familiar words, and the thoughts of Jacob and Lucy go back to bygone days, as in a dream. The sea makes a deep, monotonous lullaby-humming without, in which Jacob seems to hear the voice of the Cartown river and the mill-stream's steady flow. Now and then the vision of a mill, and a miller smoking by the reedy pool, rises up in his memory. A boy,

shadowy and indistinct, stands by the deep and silent water. It seems to Jacob now that this sorrowing youth is not himself, but some other being whom he is sorry for. The memory of his mother comes back with the dreamy odour of a country churchyard; and he feels a dim kind of joy that loved ones have gone before to greet Lucy and himself when their time shall come for the happier land. His brightest reminiscence is of Cartown and the little cottage where he first stood side by side with Lucy, who looks up at him in the twilight hour, and knows what he is thinking. They both delight to wander in that golden age of their youth, decked with the flowers of hope and love; while it is an ever present consolation to Jacob that his son will be secured from the miseries and perils which beset his own turbulent youth.

And Jacob, with a love for his art beyond that cankering desire which calculates what this or that thought is worth in the

market, made all that coast of Neathville a fairyland of romance and wonder. He found out all its story ; he probed the very heart of its mysteries ; he made every promontory repeat to him its legend ; he fought over again the battles of the ancient people who had lived there in the fabulous days. He and Lucy knew every stone and leaf, every fern and shell, every weed and flower of sea and land, from Neathville to the distant headland, where the rocks seemed to bind sky and ocean together.

Now and then Mr. and Mrs. Ferris visit their old friends at Neathville ; and when they do there are not four happier people in the world than they. Paul says so, at any rate, and makes no secret of his opinion. It is the most delightful of all delightful things, Mrs. Ferris says, to have long chats with Lucy while the men are smoking their cigars after dinner. There is no envy between these two women, no petty jealousies, no differences even of the most trifling character—no, not even about

the children. Mrs. Ferris has an only son, a dark, sharp, black-eyed little fellow, who is up to all sorts of tricks that are highly diverting to the little Martyns; and there is not one spark of envy in that full matronly bosom of the pretty Mrs. Ferris, on account of the superior order of beauty which marks the features of Jacob's children. What comfortable, happy, after-dinner talks these must be my lady readers will understand. The conversations are frequently illustrated with little frocks and pinafores, picture-books and toys; sometimes the latest fashions call for attentive discussion and analysis; for Mrs. Ferris is a lady who confesses to a careful study of dress. She says Paul likes her to keep in the front rank with the march of fashion. He is so accustomed, she says, to theatrical display, that she really thinks it desirable even to pander to his taste for pretty dresses, good lace, and effective ribbons. And then the lively little matron laughs and shows her white teeth, in response to

Mrs. Martyn's smile at her ingenious excuse for annually sacrificing a little fortune at the fascinating shrine of fashion.

Last summer, when the Ferrises went down to Neathville, they were in mourning; and Jacob and Paul conversed over their cigars in a subdued tone. They were talking of poor dear old Dudley Stewart. The once famous tragedian had slipped quietly away from them, a smile on his lips and his hand in his early pupil's. Paul said it was a solemn thing to see; but it was a happy, peaceful end nevertheless. The day before his death the old man had been wandering among the scenes of his youth, and Amy Clifton was by his side. He had rehearsed snatches of scenes in "Romeo and Juliet," in "As You Like It," in "Othello," and in "Hamlet." Like a loving instructor, he had explained in soft, subdued tones the proper reading of certain passages in Juliet's speeches, and in the dear Ophelia's. For a moment he had been convulsed with the passion of Othello's

jealous misery ; but he had relapsed, immediately afterwards, into favourite readings from the speeches of Orlando and Jacques. When he came out of this delirium he was as weak and helpless as an infant ; but he remained conscious afterwards until the last, and talked about his dear friends, and of the familiar scenes, of which they all had pleasant remembrances. They did not know when he died, he passed away so peacefully — “like one who only slept awhile and would shortly wake again,” Paul said ; but he will wake no more until the Master cometh into His kingdom, when may God have mercy on us all, dealing with us not after our sins, neither rewarding us after our iniquities !

* * * * *

The last notes of the journalist and author are transcribed. Every leaf is scored through with a long line, which begins at the advent of Aunt Keziah and ends with a glorious setting sun, led up to by gleams of glinting light that gild the

ocean's sunny path over which thought and prayer may travel to that happy land whose bright reality hath its only earthly prototype in true domestic bliss.

The evening shadows gather while I spell out these last rough notes. The light is fading from the golden pathway of which the reporter speaketh. I hear the factory hymn rise sweet and low above the ocean's lullaby. I listen to the tender, sympathetic music, and rest my eyes upon the last faint glimmer of the sun, with a vague but longing hope that the music may live in the memories of those who have accompanied me through the scenes of joy and sorrow which I have ventured to bind together with the golden clasp of the well-known Byronic proverb, that

———"Truth is always strange,
Stranger than Fiction."

THE END.



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